

Inside

Dunford: Afghan plan a transition

US will devote 1,800 troops to counterterror mission, officials say



By KAREN DEYOUNG
The Washington Post

BRUSSELS — President Barack Obama's plan to remove all U.S. combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2016 "is not a zero option ... not a withdrawal plan," the commander of U.S. and international forces there said Wednesday. Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr.

said the plan he expects to implement, following Obama's announcement last week, is a "transition" that bears no resemblance to the 2011 U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Under the plan, nearly 14,000 U.S., NATO and other international troops will remain in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of combat forces at the end of this year.

Components of that number, according to a senior U.S. military official, include 12,000 conventional

forces made up of about 8,000 from the United States and 4,000 from NATO members and others who will train and advise Afghan security forces.

To reach Obama's announced total of 9,800, the United States will also deploy a counterterrorism force of about 1,800, according to the official. The figures are the first approximate breakdown of the U.S. forces.

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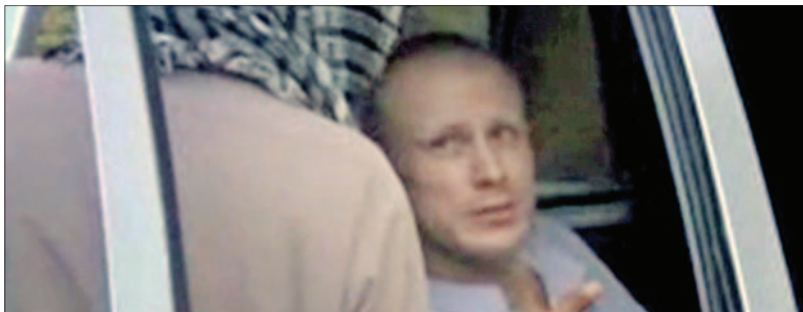
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Spurs get some rest, home court — and chance at revenge
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PHOTOS BY VOICE OF JIHAD WEBSITE/AP

The Taliban on Wednesday released a video showing the handover of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl to U.S. forces, touting the swap of the American soldier for five Taliban detainees from Guantanamo as a significant achievement for the insurgents.

What's next for Bergdahl?

Soldier likely in protective bubble as he reintegrates on the POW recovery plan

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The man at the center of a raging controversy over his captivity and release by the Taliban in exchange for five of their own senior leaders likely isn't fully aware of the tumult he has caused.

Military officials and experts on the prisoner of war experience say Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl has been in a protective bubble since his May 31 release after five years of Taliban captivity.

Bergdahl was exchanged for five senior Taliban prisoners who were transferred from the Guantanamo Bay detention facility to Qatar. He's being evaluated at the military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany.

The Idaho native, 28, is being shielded from anger directed at him, as critics — including troops who served with him

‘When you have prolonged captivity — five years — someone is going to be a little bit like Rip Van Winkle. It’s a slice of your life that has been taken out.’

Dr. Frank Ochberg
psychiatrist in the field of trauma recovery

— charge him with deserting his base and endangering his comrades in arms, a number of whom were said to have been killed or injured in subsequent searches.

SEE RECOVERY ON PAGE 8

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We're not betting on Dennis Rodman as our deterrent against a future North Korean (intercontinental ballistic missile) threat."

— Adm. James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commenting on a U.S. initiative to deploy an advanced missile defense system in South Korea

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MILITARY

Poll: Most support Afghan timetable

By DAN BALZ and SCOTT CLEMENT

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama has widespread support for his decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2016, but a scandal at the Department of Veterans Affairs has united the country in its alarm about the problems, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

Overall, 46 percent of Americans approve of the job Obama is doing as president, up from 41 percent in late April. Fifty-one percent say they disapprove. The 46 percent matches his approval ratings in late January and early March, which could mean the April finding was an anomaly. The major difference between now and the last survey is that a higher percentage of Democrats say they approve of his performance.

Obama's Afghanistan announcement drew some criticism last week from Republican lawmakers, but more than three in four Americans say they back the timetable for withdrawal. Solid majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents support the decision, although Republicans are significantly less enthusiastic.

The VA scandal, in contrast, shows no par-

tisan differences and reflects public outrage over reports of long delays for treatment and falsification of records at some veterans' facilities. The new poll finds a near-unanimous verdict, with 97 percent of Americans describing the problems as serious and 82 percent calling them "very serious."

The White House has scrambled to get on top of the situation and the public appears to put the responsibility for the problems elsewhere than on Obama. About four in 10 Americans say the president deserves significant blame for the problems that have mushroomed into a major debacle for his administration, while six in 10 say he deserves just some or none.

Partisan differences color the apportionment of responsibility. About six in 10 Republicans say Obama was principally to blame, while three in five independents and four in five Democrats say most of the blame should be placed elsewhere.

On Friday, Obama said he had accepted the resignation of VA Secretary Eric Shinseki as a succession of Democratic senators facing reelection, and others, demanded that the retired general resign or be fired. The public strongly supports that move, with 65 percent saying that it was right for Shinseki to step

down.

With the House preparing for hearings by a new select committee investigating the 2012 attacks on a U.S. diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, the poll found public doubts about the administration's credibility. Almost six in 10 say the administration has tried to cover up the facts of what happened, which is about the same percentage who said so a year ago.

A bare majority (51 percent) say they support another congressional inquiry, with 42 percent saying the issue has been investigated enough. Half say they disapprove of how then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton handled the incident, with 37 percent approving.

On Afghanistan, despite the overwhelming support for his troop-withdrawal plan, the public is evenly divided over his performance, with 45 percent approving and 45 percent disapproving.

The Post-ABC poll was conducted May 29 to June 1 among a random national sample of 1,002 adults, including users of conventional and cellular phones. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Transition: US sees hope in Afghan elections, weakened Taliban

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The president's decision" on overall troop strength "for us starts the detailed planning for the [counterterrorism] mission," the military official said.

Obama said he would cut U.S. forces roughly in half at the end of 2015, to what the military official said would be about 5,500. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss figures that have not yet been made public, said the breakdown between conventional and counterterrorism forces will depend on conditions on the ground.

At the end of 2016, the only U.S. troops remaining will be a force of several hundred assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to handle defense sales and military education programs.

Dunford briefed NATO defense ministers' meeting here as the alliance began to review transition plans that will be formalized at a "force generation" conference later this month and adopted by government leaders at NATO's September summit in Wales.

The United States and its allies in Afghanistan have expressed confidence that Afghanistan's new president, to be elected in a June 14 runoff, will sign the necessary bilateral security agreement and NATO status of forces accord to permit the post-2014 deployments.

"Right now, I don't have any concerns [about] getting to 12,000" for the conventional force, said Dunford, who briefed a small group of reporters who traveled to the NATO conference with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

Germany, Italy and Turkey each have indicated they will leave 600 to 800 troops in Afghanistan next year, based respectively in the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif, Herat in the west and Kabul. Those forces will be supplemented in each location by contributions from other NATO and non-NATO countries that have troops in the current international force under Dunford's command in Afghanistan.

"We have not yet taken positions

on the exact figures, but of course the United States announcement gives you an indication of the size of the future ... mission," to be called Resolute Support, said NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

"We haven't yet taken a decision on the duration" of the mission, including after 2015, Rasmussen said. "Right now, we'll concentrate on the establishment" of the mission, he said.

Rasmussen emphasized NATO's ongoing commitment to provide annual financial support for Afghanistan's 352,000 combined military and police forces through 2017. An initial commitment is for \$4.1 billion a year — about half of it from the United States. Dunford last year asked that the U.S. amount be increased by \$600 million to \$800 million.

U.S. and NATO officials described a Taliban force that has been greatly debilitated since the beginning of this year and pointed to the successful first round of Afghanistan's presidential election in April as a defeat for the

militants. The top two vote-getters are competing in next week's runoff to succeed President Hamid Karzai, who has refused to sign the bilateral security and status of forces agreements.

"In the wake of the election, for the first time ... the Taliban are on the defensive in the information space," the senior military official said. For 10 years, he said, the Taliban has had two messages — that the United States was occupying their country and ultimately would abandon it. In the wake of the turnover of combat operations to Afghan national forces over the past year, and Obama's announcement for the future, those messages have less resonance, the official said. The coalition has made clear, the official said, that we "won't fall off the cliff at the end of 2014."

Dunford described "friction" within the Taliban and said that although the militants are still carrying out lethal attacks against Afghan forces, "if you compare the political space of the Taliban, it's significantly reduced."

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MILITARY

Former Blue Angels captain reprimanded

Scathing report cites porn in cockpit, lewd painting and 'destructive, toxic' behavior

By CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A former commander of the Navy's elite Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron has been reprimanded after an investigation found he repeatedly failed to stop sexual harassment and condoned pornography, homophobia and lecherous behavior in the workplace.

Capt. Gregory McWherter, who served as commander of the Blue Angels in two stints between 2008 and 2012, was found guilty after a disciplinary hearing Monday, the Navy announced. He was given a letter of reprimand that will most likely end his Navy career, officials said.

A 63-page investigative report released by the Navy found that McWherter tolerated and encouraged a sex-obsessed environment in which Blue Angels pilots kept pornography in the cockpits of their jets and even painted a giant phallus on the roof of a trailer at their winter training home in El Centro, Calif.

The painting was rendered in blue and gold — the Blue Angels' colors — and was so large that it was visible on satellite imagery available on Google Maps, according to the report. It has since been painted over.

The investigation of McWherter's Blue Angels command found a pattern of other unethical behavior more typical of an "Animal House" fraternity than one of the most respected units in the U.S. Navy.

Hazing used to be common, and new arrivals were forced to wear "foam penis" hats. Pilots kept binoculars in their jets to ogle bikini-wearing women in air show crowds. Crew members for a time were allowed to buy custom-made Breitling watches at a cut-rate price of \$500 — a fraction of their retail cost. The report didn't specify

who supplied the watches.

McWherter, whose pilot call sign was "Stiffy," formerly had a cherished reputation in the Navy. A graduate of its "Top Gun" fighter-pilot school, he was brought back as Blue Angels commander in 2011 to restore order and morale in the unit after it was temporarily grounded for performing a dangerous stunt during an air show.

He also served as president of the Tailhook Association, the nonprofit fraternity of Navy aviators, until the investigation prompted him to resign last month.

The Navy's investigative report was unsparing in criticizing his leadership after it found repeated evidence of raunchy locker-room antics.

"This Commanding Officer witnessed, accepted, and encouraged behavior that, while juvenile and sophomoric in the beginning, ultimately and in the aggregate, became destructive, toxic, and hostile," Adm. Harry Harris Jr., commander of the Navy's Pacific Fleet, wrote. "He failed himself, failed those that he led, failed the Blue Angels, and failed the Navy."

McWherter declined to comment through a Navy spokesman. He was relieved of command in April from his job as executive officer of Naval Base Coronado near San Diego and was temporarily reassigned to other duties pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Blue Angels perform thrilling maneuvers at air shows across the country and have iconic status in the Navy, for which they are a key recruiting tool.

The Navy opened its investigation in March after receiving a complaint from a former member of the Blue Angels, alleging sexual harassment and other problems under McWherter's watch.

The report redacted the name of the



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Capt. Greg McWherter, left, then-commanding officer of the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels demonstration squadron, signs autographs at the NAS Jax Air Show in Jacksonville, Fla., in 2010. The Navy gave McWherter a letter of reprimand on Tuesday, accusing him of allowing sexual harassment in the workplace.

complainant. No female pilot has ever flown as a member of the Blue Angels, although the team has had numerous women serve in support roles.

According to the investigation, some Blue Angels never expected that to change. In 2010, a lieutenant commander told a reporter for a Pensacola, Fla., television station — in a conversation that was not broadcast — that the reason there were no female Blue Angels pilots was that "women want to have babies."

Other pilots laughed. The complainant cited the remark, along with similar jokes and comments, as evidence of sex discrimination.

The investigation found relatively few problems during McWherter's first stint as commander but said he encouraged a "sexually charged" workplace from 2011 to 2012.

For example, the Blue Angels set up a

messaging group on their smart phones in which they swapped pornography — especially pictures of male genitalia — and engaged in "vulgar, homophobic" chats," according to the report.

When one team member complained about pornography kept in cockpits, McWherter replied that it was "appropriate because it reflected a special trust shared between the pilot" and the crew.

The report said McWherter grudgingly ordered an end to the practice after someone filed an anonymous complaint with the commander of Naval Air Station Pensacola, home of the Blue Angels.

The report states that five other members of the Blue Angels squadron were investigated. A Navy spokesman said some former Blue Angels personnel received "formal written counseling" as a "non-punitive measure" but declined to say how many.

Hearing begins for sergeant accused of prostitution ring

By ESTHER ROBARDS-FORBEES
Austin American-Statesman

AUSTIN, Texas — Sgt. 1st Class Gregory McQueen knew the female soldier, then a 20-year-old private second class, had been sexually assaulted while training at a different Army post. As a low-level coordinator in Fort Hood's sexual assault and harassment program and one of her commanders — it was McQueen's job to prevent this type of thing from happening again.

Instead, the woman testified Tuesday, McQueen and another female soldier invited her to a home for drinks last year and tried to recruit her into a prostitution ring at Fort Hood, "telling her that she could make '\$400 to \$500 a night.'" When the other soldier left the room, the woman said, McQueen kissed and touched her

until she pushed him away.

"I was getting really nervous, getting really angry, but knowing that I can't fight a sergeant," said the woman, testifying in a case that has focused national attention on the issue of military sexual assault.

An Article 32 hearing began Tuesday for McQueen. Prosecutors said McQueen ran a prostitution ring at Fort Hood for a month or two that took advantage of cash-strapped female soldiers and connected them with higher-ranking officers.

He faces charges of pandering, conspiracy, maltreatment

of a subordinate, abusive sexual contact, adultery and detrimental conduct.

The charges against McQueen and another sergeant convicted last year in the Fort Hood case helped spur a push to revamp the military's rules on prosecuting sexual assault cases. Earlier this year, the U.S. Senate considered — then blocked — a bill that would have taken the prosecution of sexual assault cases out of the military chain of command.

The woman who testified Tuesday said she refused to join the prostitution ring and tried to forget that the incident had ever happened.

"I tried to block it out," she said.

Another woman — a private first class who had tried to recruit that female soldier with McQueen — told the court that McQueen

drew her into the prostitution ring after she told him that she was having financial difficulties. Her husband had left her and her 3-year-old son and had cleaned out their bank account. She was 20 when McQueen approached her in February 2013, she said.

McQueen told her there were other ways to make money and arranged to meet her at her on-base home that night, she said. He told her that he could connect her with higher-ranking officers who were willing to pay to have sex with her.

McQueen then asked her to "act out what (she) would do," and he had sex with her, she said. He took a picture of her while she was undressed. The woman told the court that McQueen would show the picture to other servicemembers to see if they were interested in paying her for sex.

The private told the court that she met with Master Sgt. Brad Grimes at a La Quinta Inn in Killeen in 2013. Grimes was found guilty in a December court-martial of conspiring to patronize a prostitute and solicitation to commit adultery. He was demoted to sergeant first class and received a letter of reprimand.

Three noncommissioned officers in McQueen's battalion testified that he approached them and mentioned that he knew a woman who would have sex for money. Two of them said McQueen showed them pictures of the woman, sometimes in provocative poses.

"He said that he had a female that was willing to do anything I wanted for \$75," a master sergeant told the court. The man said he was concerned by the exchange and told a superior officer.



McQueen

D-DAY REMEMBERED

'The invasion was just a part of it'

WWII vets detail the challenges that followed the famous landings at Normandy

By MATT MILLHAM

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN,
Germany

At first, it wasn't the flak that scared Julian Rice. It was the fog.

It was just after midnight on June 6, 1944, and the young Army Air Corps officer was at the controls of one of 822 cargo planes packed with more than 13,000 paratroops for an airborne assault that would set the stage for the beach landings at Normandy.

Rice could see anti-aircraft tracers rising up to wining, far enough away not to be an immediate concern, he said. The low-lying bank of fog blanketing the Normandy coast was another thing.

The planes were wing-to-wing, relying on sight to stay in formation. As soon as they got into the fog, "everything went black," Rice said.

In the belly of another plane, 1st Lt. Bill Sefton of the 101st Airborne Division's 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment was waiting for the signal to jump. He peered from the door of his C-47 at the ground below and saw fires burning. He yelled back to the men in the cargo bay, "Hey we're in great shape. The Air Force has bombed the hell out of things." "A few minutes later, I began to realize those weren't houses burning," Sefton said. "Those were our airplanes."

Friday marks the 70th anniversary of that frightening day, when 160,000 Allied troops landed on the coast of Normandy, most of them by sea, in an audacious assault that would lead to the fall of Nazi Germany. There were thousands of singular acts of bravery that day, and more than 4,400 Allied troops are known to have perished in the invasion.

As Allies gather this week to commemorate the biggest military invasion in history, the number of veterans left to tell their stories shrinks by the day.

"The invasion was just a part of it," Rice said. "Of course, the next day you're in carrying supplies to the men that you dropped. And then the day after that it was a workaday program of going in and supplying ammunition, medical supplies, food ... and evacuating wounded."

Sefton, an intelligence officer, dodged death twice in the opening days of Operation Overlord, as the invasion was named. His unit was scattered in the airborne assault. Ad-hoc units formed of men who stumbled across each other in the darkness.

"Seems like every 30 feet I'd find somebody else, and everyone of them had the same question, 'What's your plan?'" Sefton said. He told them, "Follow me."

A mortar shell fell between him and two other men as they strategized in the dark. Sefton was knocked down, but unhurt. A day later, as he and three scouts searched for the rest of the unit, rounds from a German machine gun snapped by his face. He jumped into a pond to keep from getting gunned down. He hit the bottom and realized he didn't have any air in his lungs.

"So I jumped up to the surface to get a big gulp of air, and as I went down the machine gun bursts went right across the top of my helmet."

He made it out with the help of one of the scouts, Joe Newman.

"You know, this story could go on — does go on — forever," Sefton said.

Two weeks later, Pvt. Wayne Kunkel came ashore at Omaha Beach with the 83rd Infantry Division. His outfit replaced elements of the 101st Airborne Division outside Carentan. Kunkel and a small band of infantrymen hunkered down behind a hedgehog 300 yards from the German front line in a forward observation post.

Normandy's many hedgerows were obstacles the Americans had underestimated, giving cover and concealment to the Germans and stalling the Allied advance.

When the battle to break out of the hedgerows near Carentan kicked off on July 4, 1944, Kunkel was at the spearhead. After advancing about 25 yards into a farm field, he was pinned down for hours. He looked over to see one of his buddies with a bullet hole in his forehead.

"It was murder row," Kunkel said. His company started out with more than 200 men. "At the end of the day, only 40 of us were left."

Kunkel was wounded in the fight. After getting patched up, he went right back to it.

"I ended up being back in the first aid station at midnight on July 6," he said. "It was apparently knocked unconscious, because I have no memory of how I got there or anything. And I have very little memory of my fighting in those couple days," he said.

Kunkel's fighting days were over. The war went on.

On to Mortain

By early August, the Americans had broken out of the hedgerows and the 1st Infantry Division joined Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army as it swept into Brittany.

The 30th Infantry Division relieved the 1st Infantry at Mortain, more than 50 miles south of Omaha, the bloodiest of the five invasion beaches.

When 1st Lt. Frank Towers landed at Omaha with the 30th on June 12, "we saw what virtually



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

'I think a lot of us didn't want to talk about it over the years. You know, we kind of wanted to forget. But you can't forget. It's there in the back of your mind.'

Bud Rice

World War II C-47 pilot with the 37th Troop Carrier Squadron

had happened in the preceding days, with ships being sunk along the coastline," Towers said. "They had deceased bodies stacked up there ready to take back to England for burial," and wounded men waiting to be evacuated on those same ships.

The 30th Division's seminal battle would come at Mortain.

Within hours of the 30th settling in there, the Germans launched their Normandy counteroffensive, reclaimed Mortain and surrounded a battalion of the 30th Division atop a hill outside the city.

Towers and his platoon were west of the hill lobbing mortars into the fight. German tanks came within a few hundred yards of his position, fighting in vain to cut through the American lines. A week after recapturing Mortain, the Germans lost it again.

"From that point on the Germans were on the downhill slide, heading back to Germany," Towers said. "And we were chasing them just as fast as we could go."

Two weeks later, Paris was liberated. By the end of August, the Germans had retreated to eastern France, Belgium, the Netherlands and over their own border.

Hoping to bring a quick end to the war, the Allies in mid-September launched Operation Market Garden. In a mission as bold as D-Day, more than 40,000 airborne troops landed behind German lines while two regular infantry divisions, an armored division and an armored brigade assaulted the front.

capture key bridges, and landed in a farmer's yard. The farmer came out and offered him apples. It's a memory that still brings a smile to his face.

"Everywhere we went people were trying to give us apples, because that's all they had to give us," Sefton said.

War's costliest battle

With the Allies pushing into their homeland, the Germans were growing increasingly fearful of losing. In mid-December, they launched a major counterattack that would come to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. The German plan was to split and encircle the Allied armies and force them to negotiate a peace treaty. The Allies, while surprised by the attack, managed to hold.

That was Sefton's third jump into combat — this time from the back of a truck into the Belgian town of Bastogne, which the 101st held despite being encircled by German armor.

"That's where the expression originated, 'They've got us surrounded, the poor bastards,'" Sefton said.

The siege of Bastogne is a well-told chapter of the battle. But hundreds of thousands of other troops also fought to keep the Germans from achieving their goal.

Towers and the 30th Division scrambled to Malmédy, Belgium, to stop the Germans from breaking through Allied lines.

"That killed two months right there for us," Towers said.

The battle was the costliest of the war for the U.S., which suf-

fered some 19,000 dead in six weeks of combat.

But by late January, the German offensive had failed and the Allies pushed over the Rhine. The 30th moved into the Ruhr Valley, a major German industrial region, and captured the city of Brunswick before moving onto Magdeburg, which fell in mid-April.

There, at the west bank of the Elbe River, the 30th stopped.

"That had been politically designed as the borderline between us and the Russians," Towers said. "So we had to sit there and wait for them to come and move up in front of us."

The 101st readied to drop into prison camps to prevent the Germans from slaughtering captives.

On May 8, 1945, the Germans signed their surrender.

"It was a big relief in a way," Towers said. "But in another sense it was not, because the 30th Division almost immediately had been prioritized to return to the States and go to the Pacific and to finish fighting the war down there."

But the war in the Pacific ended before Towers had to deploy there. Like hundreds of thousands of American men and women deployed to the war, they returned to the U.S. to resume their normal lives.

Known as "The Greatest Generation," many didn't talk much about their experiences. With time distancing the modern world from the war, some are now opening up with stories they say they couldn't forget, even if they wanted to.

Rice is back in Europe this week with one of his flying buddies from World War II, the 90-year-old Bill "Billy the Kid" Prindle. Rice said he got closure on the years he spent flying in the war years ago.

"I think a lot of us didn't want to talk about it over the years. You know, we kind of wanted to forget," Rice said. "But you can't forget. It's there in the back of your mind."

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VA SCANDAL

Senate GOP unveil plan to overhaul VA

Measure would allow veterans greater choice in seeking health care from providers outside troubled system

By Travis J. Tritten
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans led by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., on Tuesday unveiled their plan to repair the troubled Department of Veterans Affairs health care system by weeding out wrongdoing and expanding access to private care.

The bill allows veterans to choose a private provider if they live far from VA facilities or have difficulty getting timely care. It also gives the VA secretary more leeway to fire senior executives and forces the department to set new punishments for employees who falsify records, according to McCain and co-sponsors Sens. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Jeff Flake, R-Ariz.

The Republicans floated the legislation just a day after Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who caucuses with the Democrats, filed a wide-ranging VA reform bill that would also provide wider access to private care and more authority for the VA secretary to remove incompetent executives.

"Unlike Sen. Sanders' bill, this addresses the root cause of the current VA scandal," which is long waiting times for patients to receive care, and employee wrongdoing, McCain said.

The senators claimed their bill is more focused than Sanders' legislation, which also covers physician hiring, facility leases, scholarships, software upgrades, cost-of-living assistance adjustments for servicemembers, tuition assistance and a raft of other issues.



Burr



Coburn



Flake



McCain

Congress has been grappling with how to fix the VA health care system after a whistleblower revealed that off-the-books wait lists at a Phoenix hospital might be linked to the deaths of 40 veterans. A VA inspector general report last week found the potentially dangerous patient scheduling abuses were systemic in the department.

The Republicans said their bill would reduce waiting times for care by giving veterans an access card that could be used at a provider of their choice if they lived more than 40 miles from a VA hospital or clinic, or the VA cannot provide an appointment within two weeks, its stated standard.

Also, the bill closely follows legislation passed in the House last month giving the VA secretary power to fire or demote senior executives without going through the usual administrative process, which requires any actions to be based on formal performance reviews, according to a summary of the bill supplied by McCain's office.

The House bill, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., was passed overwhelmingly by bipartisan support.

The department would also be required to create a new policy outlining punishments including civil penalties, unpaid suspensions and termination for VA employees who falsify records related to patient wait times and health care quality.

The IG investigation in Phoenix discovered that 1,700 veterans — 54 percent — seeking primary care were left off of official electronic waiting lists until shortly before they could be seen by medical staff, which created the appearance the hospital was meeting VA goals for shorter wait times.

In a small sample of veterans, 84 percent waited on average 115 days for their first primary care appointment.

It was unclear Tuesday how the Republicans' and Sanders' bills would be reconciled.

"We're willing to listen to debate and amendments, and if (Senate Majority Leader) Harry Reid will agree to that,

I think we could get a veterans' health choice bill through this Senate in a week," McCain said.

Sanders' office said the senator had been considering a new trimmed down bill even before the GOP press conference Tuesday.

The new bill might focus primarily on new powers for the VA secretary to fire and demote senior executives but could also include some other popular measures that are not yet decided, a spokesman said.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., proposed a bill in the Senate last month that focused on eliminating what lawmakers feel is an entrenched and poorly performing VA bureaucracy by giving the VA secretary more power to fire executives, who are part of a special class of federal employees with specific rules on how they can be let go or demoted.

But his attempt at a floor vote was blocked by Sanders, who said the issue needed more discussion.

On Tuesday, Rubio again urged Reid, D-Nev., to allow a vote on his reform bill, which he said is backed by 10 Democrats in the chamber.

"Their backing means there is currently a strong bipartisan support for this legislation," Rubio said in a released statement, "which would bring accountability to VA and empower the leadership therein to make the same hiring and firing decisions you enjoy as a United States senator with your own staff."

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CEO of Cleveland Clinic approached about VA job

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The White House has approached the Cleveland Clinic's chief executive, Delos "Toby" Cosgrove, a doctor and Vietnam War veteran, about heading the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to an individual familiar with the discussions.

No final decision has been made, according to this individual, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the White House has yet to formally nominate Cosgrove.

After coming under criticism for weeks over the VA's inability to meet the health needs of veterans — some of whom had to endure long waits for appointments — and alleged efforts by lower-level employees to cover up the problems, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki resigned Friday. The agency is being run by his deputy, acting secretary Sloan Gibson.

White House officials declined to comment Tuesday evening.

Eileen Sheil, a spokeswoman for the clinic, would neither confirm nor deny that the administration had asked Cosgrove, nor discuss whether he would accept the job.

The Cleveland Clinic ranks

as one of the country's most renowned medical centers and has won plaudits for the quality of its services and its responsiveness to patients' needs. The clinic, which Cosgrove has led since 2004, has a policy of offering same-day appointments to anyone who calls.

One of the Cleveland Clinic's doctors, Michael Roizen, wrote an online piece in U.S. News and World Report two weeks ago suggesting Cosgrove was uniquely positioned to help address VA's current crisis. While he blamed Congress for helping fuel VA's predicament by failing to budget enough funds, he said smart management could also help right the agency.

"Still, I do know how to solve the problem," he wrote. "Just get Toby Cosgrove to lead the VA. (And those of us at the Cleveland Clinic hope he doesn't accept.)"

Obama visited the Cleveland Clinic in 2009, when he was working with Democrats to pass the Affordable Care Act, and he identified it as a model for the nation's health-care system. Cosgrove, a heart surgeon, also visited the White House a few years ago to discuss the law with the president as part of a small group of health-care industry officials.

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PACIFIC

Top US general backs new missile defense in South Korea

BY ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. Forces Korea commander says he supports deployment of an advanced missile defense system to the peninsula in response to the threat posed by North Korea, according to media reports.

"There was consideration being taken in order to consider THAAD being deployed here in Korea," Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti told a defense forum hosted Tuesday by the state-sponsored Korea Institute for Defense Analyses. "It is a U.S. initiative, and in fact, I recommended it as the commander."

The Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system can shoot down short-, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles with a "hit-to-kill" approach, according to the Department of Defense. Interceptors rely on the kinetic energy of the impact to destroy the incoming missile.

"The THAAD system provides a greater sensory array, better awareness of the threats and adds to the interoperability of all our systems," Scaparrotti was quoted

as saying by Yonhap News.

He said discussions about THAAD are "in a very initial stage" and will include close consultations with South Korea. A USFK spokesperson said by email Wednesday that neither side has made a final decision about permanently stationing a THAAD unit on the peninsula, or whether South Korea might acquire its own THAAD battery.

Last week, Adm. James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced in Washington that the U.S. has conducted a survey in South Korea for possible THAAD sites.

He said Pyongyang, followed by Iran, are the chief threats to the U.S. because of their missile programs, according to a DOD statement. While the U.S. has not seen the North test a missile capable of reaching the mainland U.S., that development could happen suddenly, he said.

"We're not betting on Dennis Rodman as our deterrent against a future North Korean (intercontinental ballistic missile) threat," he said, referencing the former basketball star's trips to the country and friendship with its leader,

Kim Jong Un.

Many in South Korea worry about China seeing the system as a threat and believe the U.S. is pressuring Seoul to take part in a regional missile defense system that includes Japan. Historical grievances between the two key U.S. allies and South Korean wariness over Tokyo's push for a stronger role for its military remain sources of tension in the region.

Kim Min-seok, spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, said Wednesday that South Korea has not received a request from the U.S. to deploy a THAAD system, nor does Seoul have any plans to buy its own.

Addressing concerns that China would see THAAD as a threat, Kim said the system's interception range would cover only the Korean Peninsula.

"China seems to be overreacting to this, even though there's no reason to feel conflicted," he said.

A THAAD system was sent to Guam last year.

Stars and Stripes' Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story.
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MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY/DOD

A missile is test-fired from a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense element. The top U.S. military commander in South Korea says he would support the deployment of the missile defense system to Korea to defend against any possible North Korean attack.

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CPO Club 243-5506

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Father's Day Brunch

Sunday, June 15 from 0900 to 1400

Put dad on pedestal and show that special love and appreciation this June by treating him to our Father's Day Brunch. The easiest way to a man's heart is through his stomach!

Club Alliance 243-3000

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Father's Day Brunch

Sunday, June 15 from 0900 to 1330
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MILITARY

Fighter squadron's top NCO relieved of duty

Stars and Stripes

The command master chief of an F/A-18E Super Hornet squadron based at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., has been relieved of his duties following Captain's Mast, a Navy statement said Tuesday.

Master Chief Petty Officer

James K. Shumate was found guilty by Cmdr. Ian Burgoon, the commanding officer of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 86, of violating two counts of Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and also was given a letter of reprimand Monday.

Article 92 is failure to obey an

order or regulation. It is unknown what order or regulation Shumate failed to obey.

The nonjudicial punishment followed an investigation into allegations of the master chief's personal conduct while the squadron was training at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev., during the week

of May 19. Shumate was temporarily reassigned to the staff of Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific at Naval Air Station Lemoore on May 28, based on the initial findings of the investigation.

Senior Chief Petty Officer Todd King is acting as VFA-86's command master chief.



James K. Shumate

Military judge dismisses rape, sodomy charges

By ADAM L. MATHIS

Stars and Stripes

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — A military judge on Wednesday dismissed charges of rape and sodomy against an Air Force top enlisted leader, citing a loss of confidence in the prosecution.

In addition to the rape and sodomy charges, Chief Master Sgt. Roy A. Bowser Jr. also faced charges of obtaining sex by threat of force or death and showing an alleged victim.

The judge, Lt. Col. Christopher Leavey, dismissed the case after it was determined that prosecution had known about two witnesses who could challenge the credibility of the victim, but had not released the information to the defense until this week.

This new evidence was turned over only after the prosecution had been or-

dered to review their records for failing to provide other materials to the defense.

After the most recent omission was revealed, Leavey sought to review the prosecution's evidence to make certain they did not have any other evidence that should be turned over to the defense.

The prosecution objected and sought a delay to appeal, but the defense argued another delay of the trial could harm Bowser's career and would hurt him financially since he hired a civilian attorney.

Rather than delay a court-martial that has been in the making since last year, Leavey dismissed the case.

"The government is now inhibiting the court from ensuring a fair trial," he said.

The prosecution now has a 72-hour

window to appeal the dismissal.

If their appeal is not successful, the government cannot prosecute the Lakenheath-based airman again for these charges.

Andrew Cherkasky, the lead defense counsel, said after the court-martial that this was a complex case and questioned whether the military was able to effectively prosecute these kinds of sexual assault cases.

"We wish that we'd had the opportunity to clear his name and acquit him under the facts, but under the circumstances ... this was the only just outcome and we're looking forward to him continuing his Air Force career and doing great things," Cherkasky said.

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Residents push Atsugi aircraft ban

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Residents living near Naval Air Facility Atsugi are pressing on with legal efforts to ban U.S. aircraft from the base.

Last month, a Yokohama District Court ruled that the Japanese government must pay \$70 million to residents near the base as compensation for aircraft noise.

The court also banned Japan Self-Defense Forces aircraft from flying between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. in a ruling thought to be the first time such a ban has been imposed at the district court level.

However, the court threw out an argument made by lawyers for the case's 7,054 plaintiffs to ban U.S. military night operations at Atsugi.

The Japanese government has appealed the ruling, which was challenged by the plaintiffs in their own appeal Tuesday, according to Kyodo News.

"U.S. military plane flights must be suspended to prevent noise," according to lawyers for the plaintiffs, quoted in the Kyodo report. The case will now go to the Tokyo High Court, the report said.

From staff reports

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THE NEW SANNO

MILITARY

Recovery: Military has process in place for reintegration

FROM FRONT PAGE

But he's also being shielded from the damaging disorientation that can occur when long-held captives return to society without proper reorientation.

"When you have prolonged captivity — five years — someone is going to be a little bit like Rip Van Winkle," said Dr. Frank Ochberg, a pioneering psychiatrist in the field of trauma recovery who has developed key concepts, including that of post-traumatic stress. "It's a slice of your life that has been taken out."

But lost time may pale in significance to other damaging effects of being a prisoner of war, Ochberg said. Although it's not known what Bergdahl might have experienced, other survivors of long-term captivity have suffered ill effects of prolonged isolation, mistreatment and horrifying experiences, leading to the onset of painful and potentially crippling post-traumatic stress injury, he said.

So what's happening to Bergdahl now?

While the military has declined to release specifics about his physical and emotional state, officials have detailed the U.S. military's three-phase POW "reintegration" program that he entered as soon as Special Forces troops took him from his Taliban captors in an arranged handoff.

The program's roots lie in the 1973 return of hundreds of POWs in Operation Homecoming, and have been fine-tuned using medical and psychological research in the intervening decades.

"Reintegration has been going on for years," said Arwen Consaul, a spokeswoman for U.S. Army South, which treats returned Army POWs as well as other troops and civilians held in U.S. Southern Command. "Since the Vietnam POWs came back, we realized there needed to be a process to get them back into society and be able to cope with what they'd been through. Through years of studying POWs and talking to POWs, we've been able to continually refine our process."

Phase 1 of reintegration begins as soon as a POW is released and includes medical treatment and psychological support in the theater where the release occurs. Each phase of the process involves debriefing the returned POW, focusing especially on any tactical information the returnee might be able to provide to the military.

Bergdahl is in Phase 2, known as "decompression," which experts say can last from three days to a few weeks. For Bergdahl, this phase is taking place at a military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. Although stable, he requires nutritional care after years of bad food, as well as other medical work that military officials have refused to specify.

Vietnam POWs released during Operation Homecoming underwent a three-day period at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines



VOICE OF JIHAD WEBSITE/AP

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is shown being released in a video sent to media.

that bears some similarity to the current decompression regimen. It was a welcome step that eased the way back to life in the United States, one former POW said.

"It would not be a wise thing to do, I think, to take a guy and throw him back in with his family before the military has had a chance to talk with him or debrief him," said retired Navy Capt. Mike McGrath, a pilot who spent nearly six years in a North Vietnamese prison and underwent torture after being shot down in 1967.

But it's not just talking that Bergdahl is likely being asked to do, McGrath said. After five years of arduous captivity, he might have medical needs similar to those of the Vietnam POWs.

"We had a lot of guys missing teeth, from beatings or rocks in the food or whatever," he said. "When we got to Clark, they had a whole bank of dentists ready. They were taking care of periodontal disease, and if you had broken out teeth they were making temporary bridges so you could meet your family with no teeth missing. That might seem pretty small to you, but to guys meeting their families for the first time in years, it meant a lot."

Other prisoners were suffering from parasites, long-term infections and open wounds that needed treatment, McGrath said.

During decompression, according to an Army fact sheet, former POWs are attended by team that includes medical personnel and at least one psychologist trained in survival, escape, evasion and resistance. The phase also includes operational and intelligence briefings.

Pentagon officials have declined to offer details on the specific nature of Bergdahl's debriefings. But if the sergeant engaged in misconduct in connection with his disappearance from his base in Paktika province in 2009, he might be subject to discipline. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey said Tuesday on his Facebook page. "Our Army's leaders will not look away from misconduct if it occurred," he wrote. But, echoing other Pentagon statements, Dempsey said that caring for Bergdahl and his family after a horrific ordeal is the priority.

Ochberg, who has spent a career treating and interviewing military and civilian survivors of trauma, said he trusts Dempsey and other leaders who say that Bergdahl is being treated as a patient rather than a suspect. Although "debriefing" might sound intimidating, it can be a key part of the healing process, he said.

The first step is to not be too intrusive, Ochberg said.

"When I am a psychiatrist talking to someone has been through quite an ordeal, rather than just talking about what's going on with them, it's important to establish a good relationship — to have a conversation rather than an interrogation, and be cautious in exploring traumatic and painful events," he said.

In the right hands, debriefing is positive, he said. Research on victims of conflict who were given a chance to tell their story to sympathetic listeners in tribunals overseas shows they had better psychological outcomes than those who did not speak about it, Ochberg said.

Now is not the time to try to build a disciplinary or legal case against Bergdahl, he said.

"I assume that what is going on now is medical and is what the secretary of defense has said and the president has said it is," he said. "If it turns out that investigation shows that anybody tried to take advantage of a weakened state, I would consider that a miscarriage of justice."

In Phase 3 of reintegration, which will occur at San Antonio Military Medical Center in Texas, Bergdahl will be reunited with family and begin to slowly move back into normal life in America.

During this final phase, which officials said can last weeks or longer, Bergdahl will be attended to by a large, multidisciplinary team that has been monitoring his case and planning for his return for years in twice-yearly meetings, said Consaul of Army South.

Among them are planners, air crew, chaplains, medical personnel, public affairs officials and attorneys, she said.

The Bergdahl family, Ochberg said, has appeared as a model of love and support throughout their son's long captivity. So has his hometown of Hailey, Idaho.

A warm homecoming can make a difference, Ochberg said. But so can a harsh one, which Bergdahl might experience as questions about why he became a POW in the first place heat up. At some point in his three-phase reintegration, he'll have to be exposed to what many of his former comrades are saying about him.

"We know from bitter experience that a poor reception after military service reduces the psychological health of the veteran, and that a warm reception helps," he said.

Regarding Bergdahl, "There's a lot of assumption and presumption, and it's unfortunate from a medical point of view when an individual becomes the focus of a raging controversy,"

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By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Wednesday cast doubt on the idea that several U.S. soldiers were killed in connection with past attempts to rescue Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, urging critics of the decision to swap the soldier in exchange for five Taliban to suspend judgment until more details are known.

"I do not know of specific circumstances or details of U.S. soldiers dying as a result of efforts to find and rescue Sgt. Bergdahl," Hagel told reporters after meeting with fellow defense ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels. "I am not aware of those specific details or any facts regarding that issue."

Since the release of Bergdahl, who went missing in 2009 while serving with the 25th Infantry Division in southeastern Afghanistan, there has been a firestorm of criticism directed at the soldier and the Obama administration's efforts to win his release.

Members of the soldier's former unit have come forward with accusations that Bergdahl left his post in Afghanistan and that soldiers were killed and wounded trying to locate a deserter, or as a result of operational changes resulting from the search. The White House also has taken considerable criticism from both sides of the aisle in Congress, where there is concern that the release of senior Taliban figures sets a dangerous precedent. In an essay in the *Daily Beast*, a former soldier in Bergdahl's battalion, Nathan Bradley Bethea, said two soldiers were killed soon after the disappearance during an attack on an outpost likely spurred by Taliban assumptions that the military would be in the area because of the search. Six others died on reconnaissance missions and patrols connected to the search, he said.

How closely Bergdahl's disappearance can be tied to the deaths in the months after Bergdahl walked off his remote base in Paktika province appears to be an open question that the Pentagon will contend with in coming months.

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MILITARY

Taliban inmate exchange called 'a slap in the face'

Father of 1st US Afghanistan fatality blasts Guantanamo prisoner swap for Bergdahl

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The father of America's first fatality in Afghanistan denounced the Obama administration for releasing Taliban prisoners that he holds responsible for his son's death, saying the move was a slap in the face to every American who died in the war against terrorism.

Johnny "Mike" Spann, part of a CIA paramilitary unit, was killed Nov. 25, 2001, during an uprising by Taliban prisoners near Mazar-e-Sharif a month after President George W. Bush ordered U.S. forces into

Afghanistan to punish al-Qaida and its allies for the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

Two of the five Taliban prisoners released last weekend from Guantanamo prison in exchange for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl were present during the uprising at Qala-i-Jangi prison, according to U.S. documents obtained by The Washington Post. They were Mullah Mohammad Fazl and Mullah Norullah Noori.

Spann's father, Johnny Spann, told Stars and Stripes that his first reaction to the exchange was "disappointment and disbelief."

"I couldn't believe what I was hearing," Spann recalled. "It's a slap in the face to everybody that's died in this war on terror ... Every American that's lost their life to the hands of the Taliban and al-Qaida — this is a slap in their face to know that we had five high-powered leaders that we just turned loose."

Details of the two mullahs' roles in the uprising have never been publicly spelled out by the U.S.

Nevertheless, Spann, 65, of Winfield, Ala., is convinced the two were responsible even if they weren't the ones that pulled the trigger.

"I'm convinced from all the reports and all the information that I have that that was a planned event from the night before, and [the Taliban] knew exactly what they were going to do and when they were going to do it. And I think that those two men were part of it

— part of the planning," he said.

"Everybody that was inside there had a hand in it. Nobody tried to protect Mike's life — not a single soul in there held back. Everybody in there was hell-bent on killing Americans ... Mike lost his life inside Qala-i-Jangi, and yes, I hold everybody responsible that was inside that prison for Mike's death ... Everybody inside Qala-i-Jangi has blood on their hands and was a part of it," he said.

Questions about the 2001 uprising have been raised again since the release of Bergdahl, 28, of Hailey, Idaho.

Bergdahl went missing in June 2009 in Paktika province in southeastern Afghanistan while serving with the 25th Infantry Division from Fort Richardson, Alaska.

Some former members of Bergdahl's unit have accused him of deserting and that American lives were lost looking for him.

Bergdahl is currently at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where he was sent soon after his release.

Spann is withholding judgment on Bergdahl for now. But even if Bergdahl wasn't a deserter, Spann thinks the trade wasn't worth it.

"I see no equality in what was traded for Bergdahl. I don't see no equality as far as value there," Spann said. "I mean [the detainees] were very valuable to us as far as they were responsible for a lot of American lives ... They weren't the average Joe out there carrying a rifle on the battlefield. They were leaders. They were the people that were planning things."

Obama has defended his decision, saying America had a "sacred duty" to ensure that no U.S. servicemember was left behind on the battlefield.

Spann thinks the U.S. government should try to get American prisoners of war freed, but he says the Taliban can't be dealt with like a normal enemy at the end of a conflict.

"Certainly the U.S. needs to always work for the release of those [American] prisoners," Spann said. "If we knew that we were making a deal with a responsible group of people and we knew that they were going to lay down their arms and they were not going to continue to try to kill Americans, then you might consider that to some extent. But now, we don't have any agreement like that in this war with al-Qaida and the

'I just don't think they were rehabilitated. I think that's sort of a joke for us to think that or even suppose that they have been. And I think they'll be out there costing more American lives or more American deaths.'

Johnny Spann

father of Johnny "Mike" Spann, the first American killed in the Afghan War

Taliban. This war on terror is nowhere near over."

Spann also thinks the swap sends the wrong signal and will put more Americans in danger.

"[Our enemies] know that they can get an American and they can hold them hostage, and at some point we'll trade," he said.

Still, Spann can sympathize with Bergdahl's parents, who have made a high-profile effort to push for their son's release. They appeared next to Obama in the Rose Garden on Saturday after Obama

announced the swap.

"If it was my son, would I want him home? Why yeah. But ... that's a reason that parents and kin folks can't be on the jury and they can't be the judge because they would be biased ... You can ask a parent, 'Well, if that was your son, would you want him home?' Well, of course I'd want him home. But if your son committed murder, would you still want him home? Yeah, the majority of the people [you asked] would want him to not go to jail ... But that's not the way

this system works. They're not the judge, and your kin folks don't get to decide that," Spann said.

Spann thinks Obama doesn't understand the raw emotions felt by people in his position.

"I'd almost bet you that if one of President Obama's children had been killed in this war or on 9/11, he would have a different reflection and a different attitude as far as any leniency that he would give to al-Qaida and Taliban leaders who have been active in the death of Americans," he said.

Spann thinks the released detainees will try to kill more Americans.

"I just don't think they were rehabilitated. I think that's sort of a joke for us to think that or even suppose that they have been. And I think they'll be out there costing more American lives or more American deaths," he said.

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Mike Spann

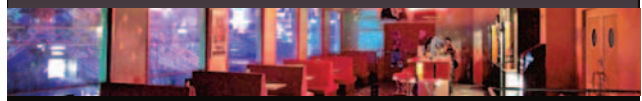


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NATION

Runoff vote likely in key Miss. primary

By STEVEN R. HURST
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A tea party challenger appears likely to force a veteran Republican senator into a runoff in a Mississippi primary that represents the ultraconservative movement's last best chance to topple an incumbent and prove it remains relevant years after bursting on the political scene.

The Mississippi contest Tuesday easily overshadowed races in seven other states on the busiest day of the primary season, several of which nominated Republican establishment-backed candidates for the November general election pickup. Republicans are battling to pick up six Senate seats needed to capture the majority. The party's big majority in the House of Representatives is not in danger.

If Republicans take control of both houses of Congress it would likely kill any chance President Barack Obama has of moving his legislative agenda in the final two years of his term.

In the battle in deep-South Mississippi, incumbent Republican Sen. Thad Cochran, 76, and tea party-backed challenger, state Sen. Chris McDaniel, 41, remained locked in a virtual tie Wednesday with 98 percent of unofficial returns counted. McDaniel had slightly over 49 percent of the vote in a three-way race. Cochran tallied slightly fewer. It takes a majority by one candidate to avoid a runoff in the state's primary to nominate the Republican candidate. The official canvass could take into June 13.

While a McDaniel win would provide a boost to tea party conservatives, it's not likely to impact the battle for control of the Senate. The winner of the Democratic nomination, Former Rep. Travis Childers, is unlikely to defeat either McDaniel or Cochran in a staunchly conservative state that last elected a Democratic senator in 1982.

The national stakes were higher in three other states — Iowa, Montana and South Dakota — where the Republican hope to pick up seats now held by Democrats. And in those states, candidates backed by the Republican Party establishment easily won their nomination battles.

The Republican leadership has been working hard this primary season to keep tea party candidates off the ballot in November, fearful that general election voters will be put off by candidates who are too right-wing.

Tea party-backed candidates last year failed to top high-profile Republicans in Senate primaries in Texas, Georgia, North Carolina and Kentucky.

The contest between Cochran and McDaniel was a costly and heated race

Republican Senate picks delight party leaders

By CHARLES BABINGTON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Republican Party continues its disciplined march toward an impressive lineup of candidates this fall, when it hopes to wrest the Senate majority from Democrats and control both chambers of Congress during President Barack Obama's final two years.

Tuesday's primaries produced another batch of Senate nominees who seem about as promising as party leaders could have hoped for. There's still plenty of time for stumbles, of course. But so far, the GOP appears to be sidestepping the type of gaffe-prone and fiercely ideological candidates who blundered into excruciating losses in 2010 and 2012.

As they did Tuesday in Iowa, Republican activists have accomplished this by blurring the differences between tea party enthusiasts and the party's corporate and "country club" wings. Tea partiers are largely justified in saying they're winning the larger ideological struggle by pulling the entire party rightward. But establishment Republicans are happy to be called "nominees."

Suspenseful or not, Tuesday's results confirmed that Republicans will have top-tier nominees in South Dakota and Montana, where long-time Democratic senators are departing or have already left.

Former Gov. Mike Rounds' primary win in South Dakota puts him in a category with Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, who won the GOP Senate nomination last month in West Virginia. Both are well-established politicians favored to pick up Democratic-held Senate seats in states Obama lost badly. Businessman Rick Weiland was unopposed in South Dakota's Democratic Senate primary.

Republicans need six new seats overall to control the Senate.

Rep. Steve Daines' win in Montana on Tuesday gives Republicans strong hopes for yet another Democratic-held seat in a state that Obama lost. Daines will face Sen. John Walsh, a former lieutenant governor appointed in February to replace six-term Democratic Sen. Max Baucus, now ambassador to China.

Walsh will enjoy some benefits of incumbency. But he's not nearly as well-known as Baucus. And since Montana has only one House seat, Daines already has been elected statewide to Congress.

The Republicans' impressive streak is hardly accidental. Waking from their 2010 and 2012 slumbers, mainstream Republicans this year steered money, smart advisers and key endorsements to carefully recruited candidates. Sometimes brutally, they brushed aside ide-

ological purists who tend to thrill tea partiers but repel moderates.

They spent heavily in Kentucky to batter tea party upstart Matt Bevin. In Colorado they cut a backroom deal to clear the way for Rep. Cory Gardner, a prized Senate recruit.

Iowa is the latest example of such pragmatic efforts. Although state Sen. Joni Ernst is largely unproven, Republicans of all stripes settled on her as their best hope to win retiring Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin's seat. Groups ranging in ideology from the Chamber of Commerce to tea party chapters, and individuals as diverse as Sarah Palin and Mitt Romney, put aside differences to rally around Ernst.

She's an Iraq War veteran best known for her TV ad boasting of castrating hogs as a farm girl. She held off businessman Mark Jacobs and will face Rep. Bruce Braley, the Democratic nominee.

Hours after polls closed Tuesday, the day's noisiest Senate primary remained too close to call. In Mississippi, six-term Republican Sen. Thad Cochran faced tea party-backed challenger Chris McDaniel.

The GOP now has solid nominees — backed in most cases by establishment Republicans and hard-core conservatives alike — for five Democratic-held seats in Montana, the president lost; South Dakota, Montana, West Virginia, North Carolina and Arkansas. It's unclear whether they can achieve the same feat in Louisiana and Alaska, whose primaries lie ahead.

The Republicans' track record is equally impressive in several states, besides Iowa, that Obama carried. They have nominated or cleared the path for seasoned, widely supported Senate candidates in Oregon, New Hampshire, Colorado and Virginia.

To be sure, Democratic senators seek reelection in those four states, and Republicans probably face uphill climbs. Still, they can force Democrats to spend money in places they'd rather not, and they broaden the GOP's image as a party that can compete almost anywhere.

These Republican successes shouldn't obscure the scrappy and seasoned nature of Democratic senators battling to hold their seats, even in states where Obama and his health care law are unpopular. Sens. Mark Pryor, of Arkansas, Mary Landrieu, of Louisiana, Mark Begich, of Alaska, Jay Hagans, of North Carolina, and Mark Warner, of Virginia, have shown they can win in toss-up or Republican-leaning states.

These senators are campaigning hard, and it's possible all of them will survive and keep their party in control of the Senate. But Republicans this year are doing almost everything they can to push these contests to the limit. And that gives them multiple paths to the six net seats they need for the majority.

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sensational when four men, all McDaniel supporters, were arrested and charged with repeatedly taking photographs of the senator's 72-year-old wife, who suffers from dementia and has long lived in a nursing home. McDaniel said he knew nothing about it, but Cochran supporters suspected dirty politics.

House GOP conflicted on alternative to health law

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are united as ever in their election-year opposition to "Obamacare," but they're increasingly divided over their promise to vote this year on an alternative to it.

The disagreement comes amid a shifting political calculus around President Barack Obama's health care law. Millions are enrolled for medical insurance through the law's exchanges, and an all-out repeal has become less practical and popular. Some Democrats have begun promoting the measure in campaign commercials, and some Republicans are treading more carefully in belittling the program.

At a closed-door House Republican caucus meeting,

several conservative members pressed GOP leaders over the pledge. Majority Leader Eric Cantor made in January that House Republicans would rally around an alternative to "Obamacare" and pass it this year.

"We said the retreat in January we were going to do this. Well it's June and we still haven't done it," Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said he told Cantor during the meeting last week. "It's moving at a snail's pace. ... We want to be for something."

Roe said he got little reply beyond polite attention. Cantor's spokesman, Doug Heye, said, "Majority Leader Cantor continues to work towards bold legislative solutions to replace 'Obamacare.'"

Behind the scenes, lawmakers and aides say, powerful committee chairmen with jurisdiction over the issue have been unable to agree over how to proceed. Some have even begun to suggest publicly that this year is not the time to vote on an alternative that likely would die in the Democratic-controlled Senate or face a veto threat from Obama.

That argument looks especially compelling in light of Republican hopes of taking over the Senate in November.

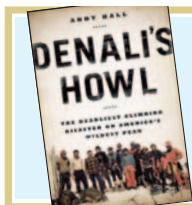
"I don't think anybody's talking about repealing the entire bill," said Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., who is a physician. "There are clearly sections of the bill ... that people are saying, 'OK, these are actually good things.'"



Cochran



McDaniel



In 1967, twelve young men set out to climb Alaska's Mount McKinley—known as Denali—one of the world's most popular and deadly mountaineering destinations. At nearly 20,000 feet, they endured winds of up to 300 miles an hour, freezing flesh solid in minutes. Only five survived.

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NATION



NATI HARNIK/AP

A car with its windows smashed by hail hangs over a creek following a severe thunderstorm Tuesday in Blair, Neb. Severe weather rolled through a swath of the Midwest on Tuesday.

Storms strike Midwest

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Punishing thunderstorms weakened Wednesday as they pushed across the Midwest, causing some flash-flooding and minor wind damage in parts of southern Illinois and eastern Missouri.

Widespread heavy rain slowed the commute for thousands of people in metro St. Louis and winds bowled over trees in the central part of Missouri, snapping electricity lines and leaving thousands without power.

That was a far less severe battering than earlier in the storms' track, when baseball-sized hail blasted homes and cars, and flooding forced rescuers in boats to pull

residents from homes in Nebraska and Iowa, where winds of up to 85 mph were recorded. Those states were the hardest hit. The storm also tracked across parts of Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota and Illinois.

"This is one of these days we can't let our guard down," said Bill Bunting, forecast operations chief at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla.

Bunting said several trained spotters reported tornadoes in central and southwest Iowa, and at least one report came in from southwest Kansas. Reports will not be confirmed until damage can be assessed.

The storms also affected primary elections Tuesday in Iowa and

South Dakota where voters had to cast ballots by flashlight in areas that lost power.

On Interstate 29 north of Council Bluffs in western Iowa, more than 25 vehicles had their windows shattered by hail, said Terry Landswork, an observation program leader for the National Weather Service in Valley, Neb.

"They were driving along Interstate 29, had no place to go, and whether they were driving or pulled over, they just didn't escape the hail," he said.

By Wednesday morning, a crescent-shaped arc of thunderstorms weakened, though winds of up to 75 mph were reported in Columbia, Mo., with heavy rain and dime-sized hail.

Dark side of Web in view in girl's stabbing

From wire services

The story sounds like an urban legend — but it's real.

On Saturday morning, a bicyclist found a 12-year-old girl in the middle of a path in Waukesha, Wis. Her clothes were caked with blood.

She had been stabbed 19 times — but she was still alive, and had crawled out of the woods for help.

"Who did that to you?" the bicyclist asked the girl during a call he made to 911.

The answer, according to police accounts, would be as shocking as the reason she'd been attacked in the first place — with the Internet being blamed as a "dark and wicked" influence.

Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier, both 12, have been charged as adults on suspicion of attempting to murder their friend and middle school classmate after inviting her for a sleepover Friday night. The plot was months in the making, police said, apparently inspired by a digital-age urban legend named "Slender Man" — a

tall, not-quite-human figure with spindly fingers and an empty face who shows up in the background of photos from haunted places.

Slender Man is fictional. But Morgan and Anissa had apparently decided he was real enough that they wanted to please him, investigators said.

After luring their friend into the woods, police said, one of the girls held down the victim while the other stabbed her in the arms, legs and torso. The victim was hospitalized in stable condition, police said, but had to undergo surgery.

The case prompted Waukesha Police Chief Russell P. Jack to warn the other parents in his community, about 20 miles west of Milwaukee.

"The Internet has changed the way we live. It is full of information and wonderful sites that teach and entertain," Jack said in a Monday news conference. "The Internet can also be full of dark and wicked things."

The source of Jack's caution can probably be attributed at least in part to the confession one of

the girls allegedly made to police about a website called Creepypasta Wiki. According to the website, "a creepypasta is a short story posted on the Internet that is designed to unnerv and shock the reader." Creepypasta Wiki is a user-edited database of those stories.

But the girls were apparently taking the website much more seriously.

It appears Slender Man was first created on a general-interest Internet message board as part of a Photoshop contest in 2009.

"I'm going to make myself loud and clear: ALL WORKS PRESENTED ON THIS WIKI AND OTHER SITES (INCLUDING SLENDERMAN) ARE FICTIONAL STORIES AND CHARACTERS," a site administrator identified as Slosedtrain wrote Tuesday.

"This wiki does not endorse or advocate for the killing, worship, and otherwise replication of rituals of fictional works," the administrator wrote, also offering condolences to the families affected by the attack.

Do I detect sarcasm in that email? No really, is it sarcasm?

By KATIE ZEJIMA
The Washington Post

The Secret Service is looking to buy software that can spot sarcasm on social media.

Yeah, good luck with that. The agency wants to buy software that, among other things, has the ability to "detect sarcasm" and language that may mean something different than it appears on first glance.

Government agencies and corporations have long used social media to try to influence the public and get their messages out, while law enforcement agencies increasingly monitor such sites for signs of trouble.

But getting a computer to detect sarcasm and its linguistic complexities can be difficult — and some experts worry at the prospect of attempts to parse speech

by a government agency that has the power to arrest people for posting alleged threats online.

"It does appear that it's going to be a pretty broad monitoring program. It will likely sweep in some First Amendment protected expression," said Ginger McCall, an associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

Secret Service spokesman Ed Donovan said the agency is seeking to create its own system for monitoring Twitter — both its own presence in social media and important issues that are trending. Detecting sarcasm is just a small feature of the effort, he said.

"Our objective is to automate our social media monitoring process," Donovan said. "The ability to detect sarcasm and false positives is just one of 16 or 18 things we are looking at."

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FACES

Timely interlude

Shelton plans break for wife after her tough week

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

Miranda Lambert's really going to need a break after an already hectic week that turned a little scary Tuesday, and Blake Shelton is prepared to provide her with one.

Lambert was already neck deep in the busiest week of the year when the private jet ferrying the country music star and her team from New York to Nashville was forced to make an emergency landing in Clarksburg, W.Va.

The plane lost pressure and spent about three hours on the ground before resuming its southward trek, said Wes Vause, Lambert's publicist. Killing time, Lambert and friends hung out with firefighters while trying on their appropriately shiny hazmat suits — Lambert's new album is named "Platinum" — and posting pictures to Instagram. They also listened to a lot of country music.

"All in all, it was a pretty good day," Vause said with a laugh.

Lambert will only get busier now that she's back in Nashville. She's in the midst of launching her fifth album and started the week with a series of appearances in New York. She'll team up with Shelton on Friday at the CMA Music Festival and

then travel Saturday to Dallas to help George Strait with his final concert.

Shelton, speaking with reporters at a news conference Tuesday afternoon, said he's already planned out a relaxing break for Lambert when she finally gets to return to Oklahoma sometime next week. "The Voice" star said the pair owns a boat on Lake Texoma and he spent a chunk of his Sunday making sure it works before coming to Nashville.

"I'm not a mechanic, but I managed to get this thing running because I know when she gets back she's going to want to do something like that," Shelton said. "She's going to want to just go float around and drink or be pulled on a tube, something like that. So I figured I'd get me some points here and get the boat running. I'm actually proud of myself."

Blake Shelton, left, says he's fixed up a boat as part of a plan to give wife Miranda Lambert, right, some well-deserved down time. She is currently promoting her new album, "Platinum."

AL POWERS, POWERS IMAGERY, INVISION/AP



Actor Jonah Hill apologizes for gay slur to paparazzo

From wire reports

Jonah Hill has apologized for using a gay slur with a paparazzo in an encounter caught on video.

A video posted Tuesday by TMZ shows a photographer pestering Hill (pictured at right), who eventually responded with muttered expletives and an anti-gay expression. On "The Howard Stern Show" on Tuesday, the 30-year-old actor acknowledged that he said "a disgusting word."

Hill said the word "does not at all reflect how I feel about any

group of people." He said that he's been a gay-rights activist "from the day I was born."

Earlier this year, Hill promoted a Human Rights Campaign effort opposing anti-gay laws in Russia ahead of the Winter Olympics.

Hill said he had been harassed by the photographer, claiming he said "hurtful things" about Hill and his family.

Chicago mayor, Fallon make reading bet

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel

and "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon have made a pact to bring the show to the Windy City — with one condition.

During Emanuel's appearance Tuesday on NBC's "Tonight Show," Fallon agreed to bring his production to Chicago for a few shows if Chicago Public School students read 2.4 million books this summer. That would mean the school system's more than 400,000 students would have to read six books each.

Emanuel's appearance with Fallon was the result of a previ-

ous deal between the two men. The mayor agreed to appear on the show if Fallon participated in Chicago's Polar Plunge into Lake Michigan in February.

Gwar frontman died of overdose

The frontman for the costume-clad "extraterrestrial" metal band Gwar died of an accidental heroin overdose, the Virginia coroner's office told local media Tuesday.

According to a statement from



the band, David Brockie, 50, was found dead in his Richmond home March 23. Brockie died from "acute heroin toxicity and the manner of death is accident," Arkuie Williams, administrator of the medical examiner's office, said in an email.



HBO

John Oliver urges commenters to give feedback to FCC on net neutrality

Los Angeles Times

John Oliver knows you're probably not that angry about net neutrality, and he'd like to change that.

Oliver used the bully pulpit of his HBO series "Last Week Tonight" to rail against telecommunications giants like Verizon and Comcast, which are lobbying to put an end to net neutrality. The comedian admitted that the issue is not, at least on the surface, a very sexy one.

Oliver argued Sunday that net neutrality

is "hugely important" because "it means that all data has to be treated equally no matter who created it." If telecom companies get their way, a new tiered system would be imposed that would allow them to "buy their way into the fast lane, leaving everyone else in the slow lane."

As a cautionary tale, he shared a graph of Netflix's download speeds during recent negotiations with Comcast. The speed surged in February, when Netflix agreed to Comcast's demands. "That has all the ingredients of a mob shakedown," Oliver said.

He steered the nation's anonymous Internet commenters toward a website created by the FCC (fcc.gov/comments) for the public to provide feedback on the proposed changes. "We need you to get out there and focus your indiscriminate rage in a useful direction," he said. "Seize your moment, my lovely trolls."

On Monday the FCC tweeted that the commenting system was "experiencing technical difficulties" due to heavy traffic. The cause for the spike in clicks could not be confirmed.

WORLD

Germany investigates phone tap of Merkel

By DAVID RISING
The Associated Press

BERLIN — German prosecutors have opened an investigation into the alleged monitoring of Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone by the U.S. National Security Agency, officials said Wednesday, in a move that could again complicate diplomatic relations between the two allies.

It was not immediately clear what the new investigation might mean in terms of possible prosecutions of Americans.

Documents provided by National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden indicated in

October that the U.S. was national security adviser, Ben Rhodes, said the U.S. believes direct dialogue between the two countries rather than an investigation is the best way to address Germany's concerns.

After mulling for months whether to open a formal probe, Chief Federal Prosecutor Harald Range determined "that sufficient factual evidence exists that unknown members of U.S. intelligence services spied on the mobile phone of Chancellor Angela Merkel," his office said.

In a similarly thorny diplomatic case, Germany got as far as issuing warrants for 13 unidentified CIA agents suspected of kidnapping a German terrorism suspect and taking him to a detention center in Afghanistan. The case was shelved in 2007 after the U.S. Justice Department said extraditing the agents would harm "American national interests."

In his Wednesday announcement, Range's office said he was not opening a formal investigation of wider allegations of blanket surveillance of telecommunications data in Germany by U.S. and British intelligence, saying that there was not yet sufficient factual evidence of concrete crimes. His office said that will remain under consideration.

Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, declined to comment on Range's decision or on whether the government feared it will weigh on relations with the U.S.



MYKOLA LAZARENKO/AP

President Barack Obama, right, talks with Ukraine president-elect Petro Poroshenko in Warsaw, Poland, on Wednesday in their first extended meeting together.

'We stand together'

Obama casts Ukraine crisis as march toward liberty

By NEDRA PICKLER
The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — President Barack Obama held up 25 years of Polish democracy as a beacon for neighboring Ukraine in a public celebration Wednesday, warning Russia that the free world is united against its "dark tactics" to violate Ukraine's sovereignty.

"We stand together because we believe that people and nations have the right to determine their own destiny — and that includes the people of Ukraine," Obama said before a crowd of more than 6,000 that spilled into the streets before Royal Castle, a symbol of Polish independence.

"Our free nations will stand united so that further Russian provocations will only mean more isolation and costs for Russia," Obama said. "Because after investing so much blood and treasure to bring Europe together, how can we allow the dark tactics of the 20th century to define this new century?"

Obama spoke just after announcing new U.S. assistance for Ukraine's armed forces, including body armor and night vision goggles — the first such delivery of tools that would directly help Ukrainian troops in their battle against pro-Russian separatists.

Holding his first extended meeting earlier Wednesday with Ukraine's President-elect Petro Poroshenko, Obama praised the billionaire candy maker as a

"wise selection." He said he was impressed by Poroshenko's business expertise and confident he can handle Ukraine's formidable economic and political challenges as he takes office on Saturday.

Obama offered Poroshenko \$5 million in new U.S. aid as Ukraine's military continues to suffer casualties in the country's east. More significant than the dollar amount was the nature of the new aid. Until now, the U.S. had only provided other nonlethal forms of aid like clothes, food and radios.

Poroshenko, speaking softly in English, thanked the U.S. for its support and refusal to recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea. He said the next phase is crucial to starting a peaceful process out of Ukraine's political crisis.

"We feel a friend in need is a friend indeed," Poroshenko said.

World leaders excluded Russia from a Group of 7 meeting starting Wednesday night in Brussels that was originally slated to include President Vladimir Putin and take place in Sochi, Russia. But the leaders of Britain, France and Germany have scheduled face-to-face talks with the Russian leader in the coming days, exposing divisions among Western nations that had united to isolate Russia over its aggressive moves against Ukraine.

form the nation's industrial heartland.

Officials said in a statement Wednesday that six militants were killed and three Ukrainian servicemen were injured in 10 hours of fighting overnight at the National Guard base.

Rebels seized a border guards base on the outskirts of Luhansk following a nearly two-day-long siege. An Associated Press reporter saw pro-Russian militia carrying crates of ammunition and explosives out of the base Wednesday and driving away in border guards' cars.

Alexei Toporov, spokesman for the Luhansk People's Republic defense

ministry, said the guards were fleeing and the insurgents did not try to detain them.

"We released them and let them go, we impeded nobody," he said. "They left their weapons, and this base is now coming under the control of the Luhansk People's Republic."

Ukraine's Border Guards Service said on Wednesday that the troops from that outpost had been evacuated to unspecified "safe locations."

There was no immediate report of casualties in the fighting at the border guards base.

— The Associated Press

Putin looks to bolster ties with Pyongyang

By ERIC TALMADGE
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Angry with the West's response over Ukraine and eager to diversify its options, Russia is moving rapidly to bolster ties with North Korea in a diplomatic nose-thumbing that could complicate the U.S.-led effort to squeeze Pyongyang into giving up its nuclear weapons program.

Russia's proactive strategy in Asia, which also involves cozying up to China and has been dubbed "Putin's Pivot," began years ago as Moscow's answer to Washington's much-touted alliance-building and rebalancing of its military forces in the Pacific. But it has gained a new sense of urgency since the unrest in Ukraine — and Pyongyang is already getting a big windfall with high-level political exchanges and promises from Russia of trade and development projects.

Moscow's overtures to North Korea reflect both a defensive distancing from the EU and Washington because of their sanctions over Ukraine and a broader long-term effort by Russia to strengthen its hand in Asia by building political alliances, expanding energy exports and developing Russian regions in Siberia and the Far East.

For North Korea, the timing couldn't be better.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union and the largesse it banked on as a member of the communist bloc, the North has been struggling to keep its economy afloat and has depended heavily on trade and assistance from ally China. Sanctions over its nuclear and missile programs have further isolated the country, and Pyongyang has long feared it could become too beholden to Beijing.

Better ties with Russia could provide a much needed economic boost, a counterbalance against Chinese influence and a potentially useful wedge against the West in international forums — and particularly in the U.S.-led effort to isolate Pyongyang over its development of nuclear weapons.

Moscow remains wary of having a nuclear-armed North Korea on its border. But over the past few months it has courted the North with various economic projects, political exchanges and a vote in the Duma, the top Russian legislative body, to write off nearly \$10 billion in debt held over from the Soviet era.

It has pledged to reinvest \$1 billion that Pyongyang still owes into a trans-Siberian railway through North Korea to South Korea — a project that is still in the very early stages. That, together with a pipeline, would allow Russia to export gas and electricity to South Korea.

6 militants killed, 3 Ukrainians injured

LUZHANSK, Ukraine — Pro-Russian insurgents in eastern Ukraine have taken two government bases in battles around Luhansk, seizing quantities of ammunition and explosives from a border guards post and taking another installation after National Guard forces ran out of ammunition.

The twin setbacks highlighted the ineffectiveness of Ukraine's poorly trained and cash-starved armed forces, which have struggled to uproot the mutiny that has engulfed the regions that

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

The hard-line China of Tiananmen Square circa 1989 has global reach 25 years later

By JOE RENOARD

"I have tried very hard not to inject myself into China's internal affairs," wrote President George H.W. Bush to his Chinese counterpart, Deng Xiaoping, soon after Chinese troops gunned down hundreds, perhaps thousands, of demonstrators in and around Tiananmen Square in June 1989. "But I ask you as well to remember the principles on which my young country was founded — freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom from arbitrary authority. It is reverence for those principles which inevitably affects the way Americans view and react to events in other countries."

This February, 25 years after that massacre, Gary Locke, the outgoing U.S. ambassador to China, gave a final speech before exiting the country.

"The U.S. is deeply concerned," said Locke, "over the recent pattern of harassment, arrests, prosecutions of good-government advocates, of public interest lawyers, of activists, Internet journalists, religious leaders... The United States calls on China to guarantee peaceful activists the protections and freedoms to which they're entitled under China's international human rights commitments."

And so it goes. China remains an authoritarian, one-party state whose leaders see domestic activists and international human rights laws as threats to their sovereignty.

To Beijing's credit, it has overseen economic development on a scale that is unparalleled in world history. Through three decades of double-digit annual growth, about half a billion Chinese citizens have pulled themselves out of poverty. This growth has been the envy of the developed world, but it has not been accompanied by a concomitant extension of political and civil liberties.

Recent examples abound. In a closed trial in January, a judge sentenced democracy advocate Xu Zhiyong to four years in prison for "gathering a crowd to disrupt public order." When Xu tried to read his concluding statement, the judge silenced him after 10 minutes and called his words "irrelevant." One month later, teacher Ilham Tohti was detained and charged with inciting Uighur separatism, and dissident Cao Shunli died in custody after being denied medical treatment. In March, leaders of the Hong Kong journalism community were physically assaulted following demonstrations against Beijing's mounting media strictures.

In stark contrast to 1989, Beijing's reach now extends far beyond China's borders. The nation's rulers have embarked on a multifront effort to undermine the international human rights regime. Beijing uses its considerable diplomatic power and economic leverage to block resolutions in multilateral forums and to weaken the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The latter endeavor became much easier in November when China won a council seat alongside such perennial violators as Russia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Cuba. China now routinely wins far more votes on the council than America, due in no small measure to Beijing's prodding of its African and Middle Eastern clients.

Even more significant is China's bilateral pressure on developing nations that hope to secure trade, investment and development loans. It is no secret that China has long served as a tolerant patron to abusive regimes and corrupt states such as North Korea and Zimbabwe, but Chinese capital extends far beyond the developing world's



KIN CHEUNG/AP

Police officers try to stop a protester from throwing "ghost money" into the Chinese liaison office in Hong Kong on Tuesday to mark the 25th anniversary of China's crackdown on pro-democracy protests on Tiananmen Square. The banners read "Stop one party rule in China," "Memorial," and "Demand accountability for the massacre."

basket cases. Owing to Africa's abundance of natural resources, China is now the continent's largest trading partner.

Annual Sino-African trade tops \$200 billion, and China has financed countless infrastructure projects in Africa and across the southern part of the globe.

This investment has been a godsend to troubled economies, and it may yet encourage stabilizing economic and political reforms in some nations. But as in China itself, so far the financial boost has

China's formidable economic influence has had a disquieting effect on global democracy promotion.

done little for political and civil liberties in the developing world. Time will tell whether China's desire for low-risk investments will persuade Beijing to reprimand the most repressive states, but for now the Robert Mugabes of the world seem only to have been strengthened by the infusion of Chinese cash.

China's formidable economic influence has had a disquieting effect on global democracy promotion. The worldwide trend that culminated in dozens of democratic transitions late in the 20th century appears to be giving way to a counter-trend that has been heavily influenced by leading authoritarian states.

According to Freedom House, 54 nations saw political and civil liberties decline in 2013. These governments in effect promise their citizens order and prosperity in return for limits on civil and political rights, and the larger nations among them work to undercut other nations' reforms while they themselves serve as models of autocracy. "Russia and China set the standard for this kind of authoritarian regime," says Freedom House's president, David J. Kramer. Beijing has also demonstrated its influ-

ence in more symbolic ways. When the imprisoned Chinese writer Liu Xiaobo won the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, it was the first time since 1936 that neither the winner nor any member of his family attended the award ceremony in Oslo. Beijing saw the award as a Western stab at China's sovereignty and accused the Nobel committee of "orchestrating an anti-China farce." Just as conspicuously absent were 19 nations that had declined to send representatives as a result of Chinese pressure.

No single figure has caused Beijing as much consternation as the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan spiritual leader's visits to Washington invariably elicit official protests from Beijing. But while the United States is strong enough to fend off such criticism, other countries seem less capable. South Africa has twice denied the Dalai Lama entry visas in recent years, presumably for fear of hindering Chinese investment in that country. "We are shamelessly succumbing to Chinese pressure," lamented Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. "I feel deeply distressed and ashamed."

To be sure, the U.S. is hardly without guilt in the human rights arena. Washington has supported its share of rogues and dictators in years past, and even today counts among its friends a number of illiberal, undemocratic regimes. The narrow defense of national interests has often forced Americans to compromise on democratic principles. But Beijing's active undermining of international human rights is on another level altogether.

For the foreseeable future, outsiders will have a limited ability to pressure China to expand civil and political liberties at home and accommodate democracy abroad. If and when lasting changes come to China, they will have to come from within.

Joe Renouard is an associate professor of history at the Citadel. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

OPINION

Prisoner trades are always a terrible idea

By ADAM B. KUSHNER
The Washington Post

Bowe Bergdahl, the U.S. Army sergeant seized nearly five years ago by the Taliban, is coming home.

That's great news for him, for his family, for President Barack Obama's standing, and for other soldiers who might worry whether the White House would parley with terrorists for their release. Even the Old Testament praises "the redemption of captives" among the highest moral acts. Everyone loves a story with a happy ending.

But in this case, the sourpusses, spoilsports and partisans are right. Swapping five Guantanamo detainees in exchange for Bergdahl was a terrible idea.

The reasoning here is pretty straightforward: When you set up incentives that reward kidnapers, you can count on more kidnapping. And seen from the Taliban's perspective, the Bergdahl swap was just such an incentive. Afghan commanders made the great American hegemon violate its sacred we-don't-negotiate-with-terrorists creed. And, more importantly, they showed the world that one freed American fighter is worth five freed insurgent fighters.

In other words, they have every reason to dedicate themselves to acquiring more Americans. (Of course, they already had this incentive, but the spectacular Bergdahl results may prod them to shift resources away from, say, assassinating local officials toward more abductions.) Todd Sandler, an economist at the University of Texas-Dallas, studied four decades of data and found that every kidnapping paid, 2.5 more abductions occurred.

This dynamic has played out in Israel, where the government vows to redeem any captive—even corpses—at any price. It's a deeply noble sentiment, one enshrined in Jewish law as *pidyon shvuyim*. But it leads to heinously, and increasingly, asym-



VOICE OF JIHAD WEBSITE VIA AP VIDEO/AP

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, an American soldier held by the Taliban for five years, waits in a vehicle guarded by the Taliban in eastern Afghanistan, just before he is handed over to U.S. forces Saturday.

metrical trades. It got to the point where, in 2004, Israel traded 430 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners (plus the remains of 59) in exchange for three dead soldiers and one live one. In the most famous case of recent memory, Hamas snatched Gilad Shalit, a 19-year-old tank gunner, during a Gaza raid in 2006. First, Israel gave up 20 female prisoners for proof that Shalit was still alive. Then, in 2011, the government redeemed him for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners (who were said to have been responsible, collectively, for 569 dead Israeli civilians).

Incentives aren't the only problem; it

can also be bad for security, even outside Afghanistan. "There is no question that the Iraqi insurgency learns from Hezbollah and that the Taliban learns from the Sunni insurgency," said Steve Simon, a scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute, when I asked him about this in 2008.

And there's no guarantee released prisoners will settle quietly into retirement. After a 1985 exchange, several liberated Palestinians rejoined the armed struggle. In Bergdahl's case, the freed Gitmo prisoners had already been designated by the Pentagon as "high-risk" operatives "likely

to pose a threat." No wonder Afghan leaders are unenthused about the deal; Republicans are right to object.

None of this means that Bergdahl shouldn't have been rescued, nor that Guantanamo detainees should simply languish there in perpetuity. But a prisoner exchange sets forth a simple equation for U.S. opponents—one that doesn't help the cause. If the U.S. government had truly exhausted every option short of deal-making, and it was wedded to bringing Bergdahl home, it should at least have traded one life for one life. That's a fair trade.

Kushner is the editor of PostEverything.

Swap is sign we're easing out of Taliban-fighting business

By JOSHUA KEATING
Slate

WASHINGTON

It was only a matter of hours before the release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, held by the Taliban for five years, became fodder for partisan controversy, with administration critics, particularly congressional Republicans, raising questions about whether sufficient safeguards have been taken to keep the five Taliban detainees released from Guantanamo from returning to the battlefield and whether it's proper for the U.S. to be negotiating with terrorists at all.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said it is "disturbing that these individuals would have the ability to reenter the fight." Gen. James Jones, Obama's former National Security Adviser, pointed out that previously released detainees have returned to fighting and been involved in attacks against Americans.

The Guantanamo recidivism rate has been a matter of some controversy, with analysts like Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann of the New American Foundation arguing that the Defense Department has significantly exaggerated the number of former Gitmo detainees involved in hostilities against the United States.

But some undoubtedly have, including

If all goes according to plan, by the time these five can get back to Afghanistan, they won't pose much of a threat to U.S. troops because there won't be that many U.S. troops there for them to fight.

Said Ali al-Shihri, who was held at Guantanamo from 2001 to 2007 and went on to become the deputy leader of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula after his release. (He was killed by a drone strike in Yemen last year.)

According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the confirmed recidivism rate for the 603 Guantanamo detainees released as of July 2013 was 16.6 percent with an additional 12.3 percent "suspected of reengaging." That sounds high, though it's significantly lower than the recidivism rate for the U.S. criminal justice system. Also, the rates are dropping—one of the 71 prisoners released between 2009 and 2013, only three are confirmed to have reengaged. That's a 4.2 percent rate compared to 18.2 percent before that year.

Of course, the five being released from Guantanamo are not just low-level fighters or bystanders swept up in the wake of 9/11. They are all former senior Taliban leaders,

implicated in attacks against U.S. forces, cooperation with al-Qaida and atrocities against civilians. One, Mohammad Fazl, is the Taliban's former deputy defense minister. Under the deal, the five will be flown to Qatar and placed under a one-year travel ban.

Is the administration simply unconcerned about these five rejoining the fight? More likely the deal is part of a larger push, also on display in last week's troop withdrawal announcement, to disengage the U.S. from the war against the Taliban.

The reason that the detainee recidivism rates have been dropping is probably not because Guantanamo has become so much more effective at rehabilitating detainees. It more likely that, as the U.S. has drawn down its troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are fewer opportunities to engage in hostilities against Americans in these countries.

If all goes according to plan, by the time these five can get back to Afghanistan,

they won't pose much of a threat to U.S. troops because there won't be that many U.S. troops there for them to fight.

Despite what some are saying is a fundamental abandonment of the U.S. practice of not negotiating with terrorists, this is not the first time in the global war on terrorism that the U.S. has reached out to groups who have attacked U.S. troops in the past. See Anbar, 2007.

Of course, there are still concerns that, like al-Shihri before them, they could participate in global terrorism. But it seems as if U.S. policymakers have concluded that fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan is no longer a particularly effective way of combating terrorism internationally.

A 2011 report by the Kandahar-based researchers Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, who are about as plugged-in to Taliban sources as any Western researchers could ever possibly be, suggested that opportunities were ripe for a break between the Taliban and al-Qaida, but that continued U.S. military activities in Afghanistan were making such a break less likely. The two groups, whose relationship was always a bit fraught, may have drifted even further apart in the wake of Osama bin Laden's death.

Keating is a staff writer at Slate focusing on international news, social science and related topics.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP



RICHARD DREW/AP

High-strung interview

Bello Nock, a seventh-generation circus performer, in an attempt to set a record for The Longest Continuous Interview on a Wire, sits 27 feet above New York's Times Square on Tuesday. This eight-hour stunt kicks off the "Summer of Bello" which will culminate Aug. 30 in an attempt to perform fifteen death defying stunts in Las Vegas.

Transit workers call in sick, causing delays

CA SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco's famed cable cars halted for a second straight day, and the rest of the city's transit system experienced delays after drivers called in sick again on Tuesday, days after overwhelmingly rejecting a new labor contract, officials said.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency said it was running about half of its normal weekday service. Though that was up from a day earlier, riders were warned that they would still experience significant delays.

2,200 operators represented by Transport Workers Union Local 250-A rejected the contract by a 1,198 to 42 vote Friday, according to totals on the union's web site. The workers are not allowed to go on strike, but they can call in sick.

I-495 bridge closure to cause traffic woes

DE DOVER — The emergency closing of an interstate bridge in Delaware because some support columns are tilted could mean major headaches for motorists on the heavily traveled Interstate 95 corridor through the Mid-Atlantic region, officials say.

State officials ordered the closing Monday of the Interstate 495 bridge over the Christina River in Wilmington, Del. after discovering that four supporting columns were tilting. The 4,800-foot bridge normally carries about 90,000 vehicles a day on I-495, which diverts traffic around the city of Wilmington and toward the port of Wilmington.

THE CENSUS

60

The weight in pounds of a runaway tortoise that is back home in Michigan after disappearing for several days and making it about a half-mile during that time. The pet, Franklin, strayed from his home in Davison Township on Thursday and was found Sunday. Owner Chris Breuhan said family members walked his 10-acre property and started putting up flyers to see whether anyone had spotted Franklin. The man who found him saw one of the flyers, and Franklin was brought back home. Breuhan said he was concerned that Franklin might get run over by a vehicle. "Nothing will eat him," Breuhan said, noting



Official: Deal soon to be signed for Rosie's plant

MI DETROIT — The leader of an effort to save a portion of Rosie the Riveter's old Detroit-area factory said his group is moving forward on a purchase agreement for the property and could begin construction as early as this fall.

Yankee Air Museum founder Dennis Norton said he and the facility's owner soon will sign the deal and expect to formally close on the sale next month.

Norton's group raised millions to buy a 150,000-square-foot piece of the plant for use as the new home of the Yankee Air Museum. The rest of the Ypsilanti Township factory where Rose Will Monroe helped make bombers during World War II is being razed.

Police confiscate \$3M worth of shoes

KY RADCLIFF — Police are investigating after finding \$3 million worth of missing shoes at a central Kentucky home.

Media outlets report that officers with the Radcliff Police Department confiscated thousands of pairs of Nike shoes that were scattered in front of the home.

According to a search warrant

filed last week, the shoes were supposed to be shipped in 2009 from a Nike distribution center in Tennessee to another one in Texas, but never made it.

The women who were in possession of the shoes said they had purchased them from someone else and didn't know they were stolen. They said they were selling them at a flea market.

Woman nearly hit by stray bullet, 2 charged

MT BILLINGS — Two Billings men face criminal charges after a bullet fired by one of them during target practice narrowly missed a woman who was peeling potatoes.

The Billings Gazette report Terry McCurdy, 40, and Douglas Johnson, 39, appeared in Justice Court Friday on negligent endangerment charges.

Charging documents said the woman was standing at her kitchen sink on May 15 when she and her husband heard a loud pop. They spotted a hole in the kitchen wall and found a bullet on the floor.

Two Yellowstone County deputies reported a bullet struck the cabinet about a foot above where the woman had been standing. Deputies located McCurdy and Johnson about 800 yards away.

Puppy drives car into Massachusetts pond

MA CANTON — After going for a walk, a German shepherd puppy owned by a Massachusetts man decided to go for a drive — straight into a pond.

John Costello said his 12-week-old puppy, Rosie, was so excited Sunday after going for a walk at Bolivar Pond in Canton that she jumped in his running car, hit the gear stick and shifted into drive, before falling onto the gas pedal and sending the car careening into the water.

A couple of passers-by saw the commotion and helped Costello rescue Rosie.

The 911 call surprised even police. Officer Robert Quirk says he has never heard of a dog driving into a pond.

Octogenarians scare off would-be robber

WA MILTON — A Washington state couple in their 80s say they managed to spook a would-be robber who burst into their home shortly after they returned from a Tacoma casino where they won \$500.

KOMO-TV reported Jim and Betty Lilja, of Milton, wonder

whether they were followed home.

They say a man in his 20s barged into their home May 23 with his hand in his pocket. He demanded their money and threatened to shoot. Jim Lilja says he told the intruder he was 85 years old, so "if you want to shoot, go ahead and shoot."

The couple ran outside, and Jim Lilja decided to push the alarm button on his car key. That sent the robber racing out of the house — without the couple's cash.

Police: Man took fire truck joyride

PA BRIDGEWATER — A Pennsylvania man has been accused of sneaking into a fire department and taking a woman on a 30-minute joyride in a fire truck.

The Beaver County Times reported that fire officials saw Randy Allen Davidson — who is not a firefighter — enter the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department about midnight May 26, grab the vehicle's keys and drive the truck away with a woman in the passenger seat.

Police said Davidson returned the truck and the keys to their original positions about 30 minutes later.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES.

150 YEARS ON HALLOWED GROUND



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

150 YEARS ON HALLOWED GROUND

ARLINGTON
WHO'S THERE?

Among the notables:

- Presidents William Howard Taft and John F. Kennedy. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis was buried beside JFK in 1994. Kennedy's grave is marked with an eternal flame.
- Chief Justices Earl Warren, Warren Burger and William Rehnquist
- Senators and brothers Robert F. and Edward M. Kennedy
- 5-Star General George C. Marshall
- Pulitzer Prize-winning war correspondent Margaret Higgins, the only woman correspondent to cover the Korean War
- Dashiell Hammett, who wrote numerous detective novels, including "The Maltese Falcon" and "The Thin Man" in 1930s, served in World Wars I and II and was jailed during the McCarthy era as communist threat.
- Spotswood Poles, who was one of the best baseball players in the Negro Leagues during the early 1900s with a batting average of .487
- Audie Murphy, WWII's most decorated soldier and movie actor who made more than 40 films
- Glenn Miller, the noted composer and Big Band leader, has a headstone at Arlington, but his body was never found after his plane crashed over the English Channel in 1944.
- Pvt. William Henry Christian, 67th Pennsylvania Infantry, first military servicemember interred in Arlington National Cemetery, May 13, 1864
- Anita Newcomb McGee, who was the first woman Army surgeon in 1898, and founder of the Army Nurse Corps in 1900
- Walter Reed, a pioneer bacteriologist who led experiments establishing mosquito transmission of Yellow Fever
- Astronauts Lt. Col. Virgil "Gus" Grissom and Lt. Cmdr. Roger Chaffee, who were killed in a fire aboard their Apollo spacecraft at Cape Canaveral, Fla. They are buried next to one another.
- Mark Matthews, the oldest of the Buffalo Soldiers, at 111
- Medgar Evers, civil rights leader killed in Mississippi in 1963
- Thurgood Marshall, First African-American Supreme Court justice

SOURCE: Arlington National Cemetery



Sgt. 1st Class Tanner Welch assists President Barack Obama in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 2013.

Courtesy of the U.S. Army

'Old-fashioned discipline'

By CARLOS BONGIOANNI
Stars and Stripes

Known for its impeccable precision, the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is one of Arlington National Cemetery's most popular attractions.

Played out every half-hour during the cemetery's summer schedule and every hour the rest of the year, the ceremony marks the end of one sentinel's tour of "walking the mat," and the start of another's.

The scene typically evokes a hushed awe from onlookers as they watch the sentinels perform their duties with meticulous exactness. Every footstep, hand placement and eye movement is measured.

The elite tomb guard unit is responsible for safe-guarding the tomb 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The platoon is made up of 31 soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment. Also known as the "Old Guard," the regiment primarily serves as the official U.S. Honor Guard, performing ceremonial duties for the White House, Pentagon, Arlington and other national memorials in the Washington, D.C., area.

'Nothing we do here is rocket science. It's just very basic tasks done to a very high standard.'

Sgt. 1st Class Tanner Welch
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Platoon
sergeant of the guard

Ensuring nothing dishonorable happens at the tomb is a top priority. "The biggest fear sentinels have is that something might happen to the tomb ... to the unknowns," said Sgt. 1st Class Tanner Welch, sergeant of the guard for the Tomb of the Unknowns Soldier Platoon. "Somebody could throw a can of paint or something at the tomb. And for a sentinel, to have that desecration and disrespect toward the unknowns happen on their watch ... that's probably their number one fear."

After serving in the 3rd Infantry Regiment for six months, soldiers are allowed to apply for specialty platoons such as the tomb guard unit. All that's required, noted Welch, is some "old-fashioned discipline."

Many try out but few are chosen for the job. "Nothing we do here is rocket science," said Welch, 30. "It's just very basic tasks done to a very high standard."

The high standard that so impresses the crowds is a barrier that nine out of every 10 soldiers who apply are unable to hurdle. The 10 percent who do make it in have typically been through about eight months of rigorous training.

The training includes a series of uniform tests, knowledge tests and outside-performance tests.

On the uniform portion, the amount of "deficiencies" trainees are allowed on their

uniform inspections dwindles until, on the final test, only two "minor deficiencies" are allowed. Minor deficiencies are anything between 1/64th of an inch to 1/32nd of an inch off from the standard. Anything more than 1/32nd of an inch off is considered a major deficiency, and would cause a trainee to fail the program.

For the knowledge test, trainees are required to memorize a 17-page pamphlet. On the final knowledge test, they're allowed 10 deficiencies.

It may sound like a lot, but to put it into perspective, Welch noted that if a trainee missed just one comma per page that would be almost double the allowable deficiencies. And, yes, punctuation marks count.

On the outside-performance test, trainees again are allowed just two minor deficiencies on their final test.

"It's incredibly humbling to know that everything you do is for somebody else," said Welch, speaking of the dedication and devotion the sentinels must show to have the privilege of standing guard for the unknowns. "There's a lot of time spent being told, 'You don't meet the standard, you don't meet the standard, you don't meet the standard.' When you finally get to the point where it's like, 'OK, you met the standard, now continue that in somebody else's name,' it's a great thing."

The volunteers put out their best for little to no reward. "It speaks to a lot of people in what they hope the world will be like," Welch said.

"You know, if more people were like tomb guards, the world would be a better place."

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No one is ever buried alone

By MEREDITH TIBBETTS
Stars and Stripes

Arlington National Cemetery is a special place for Doreen Huylebroeck.

She brings her 5-year-old grandson there at least once a week, and he knows where his grandfather is buried. He goes right to the grave and kisses the headstone, she said.

"Every day is so meaningful," she said. "I love walking around and seeing the history."

Huylebroeck is part of that history. Five years ago, she joined the Arlington Ladies, an organization that makes certain no one is ever buried alone.

It was founded in 1948, when then Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force Hoyt Vandenberg and his wife, Gladys, were walking through the cemetery. The couple noticed a funeral being held, but the only people there were the chaplain and honor guard. The Vandeborgs thought that wasn't right, and she started a tradition.

The women are at Arlington despite rain, snow and extreme heat, attending funerals as a way to give back to military heroes.

"The military person is a hero and he deserves it. It's just a special way to honor him and be there," Huylebroeck said. "It's our way of saying thank you to him for his service."

The Arlington Ladies is an umbrella group, with volunteers from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. The Marine Corps have their own group, separate from the Arlington Ladies.

Huylebroeck joined two years

"The military person is a hero and he deserves it. It's just a special way to honor him and be there. It's our way of saying thank you to him for his service."

Doreen Huylebroeck



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Doreen Huylebroeck offers condolences to Decondi Mayo, father of Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Mayo, during the funeral service at Arlington National Cemetery in April.

after her own husband, Chief Petty Officer Edward Huylebroeck, was buried at Arlington. She said it took a few nudges from friends before she signed up.

"After my husband died, I cried and cried, but you get to the point where you say to yourself, 'I really do want to give back,'" she said.

Huylebroeck attends mostly Navy funerals, and is one of about 50 women who volunteer for the Navy. The Army, a much bigger service branch, has many more women to compensate for more funerals. All the women in the group have a direct connection to

the military. Huylebroeck said most are military spouses, but some are also military daughters. The Navy women work half days: There are about six funerals a day for US Navy servicemembers at Arlington, so one person will cover the morning funerals and another will attend three more in the afternoon.

"I never thought I could be an Arlington Lady. I thought I would cry no matter what," she said. "You just have that inner strength and you know you are there for support for the family."

And Huylebroeck goes above and beyond to do that. The Navy women meet relatives in the family room before a service; other branches do not. Huylebroeck takes the time to get to know the family a bit. She reads an obituary beforehand, so she has talking points and a way to connect. If a family isn't local, she gives them her contact information

and offers to place flowers on the grave on a birthday or anniversary. She pays for the bouquet out of her own pocket and says she is nothing but a link between the family and the grave.

"It's the least I can do. I would appreciate it if someone did it for me," she said.

She's attended close to 500 funerals, she said, and some are harder than others. She recently attended the funeral of Mark Mayo, a sailor from Maryland who was shot and killed protecting another sailor aboard USS Mahan at Naval Station Norfolk.

That funeral, she said, was particularly hard. So was attending the funerals of a 2-year-old and twin babies.

"This year isn't really any more special than last year or next year," she said of Arlington, which is marking its 150th anniversary. "It's just always special."

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ARLINGTON JUST THE FACTS

A Supreme Court ruling in 1882 could have resulted in the exhumation of 17,000 graves. More than a decade after Robert E. Lee's death, the Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. government had seized his estate without due process and ordered it returned to his family in the same condition as when it was illegally confiscated. If followed, the ruling could have required the exhumation of all of Arlington's dead, but instead Lee's son officially sold the property to Congress for \$150,000 in 1883.

Nearly 3,800 "citizens" or "contrabands" (former slaves who were living in Freedman's Village on the Arlington Estate) are interred in Section 27.

Three enemy combatants are buried at Arlington — one Italian and three German POW who died in captivity in Washington, D.C.

The first graves in Arlington National Cemetery were dug by James Parks, a former Arlington Estate slave. Buried in Section 15, Parks is the only person buried there who was born on the property.

Individuals may request a flag to be flown over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Not allowed: playing musical instruments, bringing pets or having picnics. Check for more rules before you go.

The Old Amphitheater has a new name.

On May 30, the building was renamed after Civil War wounded warrior James R. Tanner, who is buried a few yards away in Section 2, Grave 877.

Tanner, a corporal in the 87th New York Volunteer Infantry, lost both legs after the Second Battle of Bull Run in 1862. He later became a stenographer and was present at Abraham Lincoln's deathbed. He was also an advocate for veterans' rights.

The building was used from 1873-1920 before the Memorial Amphitheater was dedicated.

SOURCES: www.history.com; www.arlingtoncemetery.mil; www.connectionnewspapers.com

150 YEARS OF HONOR AND GRATITUDE.

As we commemorate the establishment of
Arlington as a national cemetery, we pay
tribute to all who grace its hallowed ground.



150 YEARS ON HALLOWED GROUND

ARLINGTON
SECTION 60

"Christopher David Horton, Spc. U.S. Army, Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 1984, Sept. 9, 2011, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Valiant Warrior, Fearless Sniper" are words on one of more than 900 graves from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the cemetery's Section 60.

For the dead — like Horton, killed in a hail of enemy AK-47 fire — the words are a spare summary of sacrifice; what Abraham Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion."

It was the outpouring of grief by young widows, parents and battle buddies that led to the only consistent splash of color within the cemetery — the balloons, childhood drawings, stuffed Easter bunnies and unopened bottles of beer left on the graves of Iraq and Afghanistan war dead.

The now-widely recognized Section 60 is a long stroll from popular tourist sites such as the Kennedy grave and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Unlike the deceased retired military that make up most of the 27-30 burials that occur at Arlington each day, the dead of Section 60 were so young, that the grieving here is far more intense.

So it is a place where a grieving father may be seen laying prostrate on his son's grave or where a mother sits in a thunderous downpour unaware that her lawn chair is sinking into a softening earth.

Those who mourn regularly have coalesced into a kind of club, but one that one mother conceded "nobody wants to be in."

— Gregg Zoroya,
USA Today



'A big honor ... a big responsibility'

By MEREDITH TIBBETTS

Stars and Stripes

The final resting place for more than 400,000 active duty servicemembers, veterans and their families is 624 acres of peace and beauty.

Maintaining the beauty at one of the oldest cemeteries in the United States falls to a small group of people, three of whom are government employees, including Horticulturist Division Chief Steve Van Hoven. Additional contract employees help out as well.

There are 8,500 trees — 300 varieties — spread across the acreage. The oldest tree in the cemetery is estimated to be 250 years old. But that estimate could be off — it's hard to tell how old a tree is until it falls over and someone can count the rings. Van Hoven said about 100 trees predate the Civil War, and some even predate Arlington House, the former home of Robert E. Lee.

"We plant about 250 trees every year. Those are mostly to replace trees that either die of disease, insect pests, fall over in a storm. Usually we are just planting the same tree in the location" of a dead one, Van Hoven, 44, said.

Dying trees aren't the only problem for horticulturists. At Arlington, some trees grow over — or start to uproot — grave markers. When that happens, the grave gets a foot marker to keep it within Army regulations. When a tree located between gravestones is replaced, a smaller tree is planted to prevent overgrowth.

"It takes a lot of planning. You need to be organized and you need to think ahead. You can't just go out there you know, three days before (a funeral) and say that tree isn't looking good or the turf is a problem," Van Hoven said.

He has worked at Arlington since 2006, when he was hired as an urban forester. Before that, he worked at the Smithsonian Institution for two years.

"They are two very different missions," each with high visibility, Van Hoven said. "Arlington National Cemetery is the most sacred ground and it is an honor to work here. Horticulture is not the main focus, but we are proud to keep Arlington beautiful as the backdrop."

His time is split between office work and field work, but this time of year — spring and summer — he spends most of his time outdoors supervising.

The contractors are the people who literally get their hands dirty, while Van Hoven does diagnostics and surveys to see what needs to be done.

"I really like being out in the field, dealing with the plants and trees and not doing paperwork," the New York native said.

Each section of the cemetery is mowed at least once a week during the growing season, and each tree gets pruned about once every four years.

The landscape of the cemetery is changing, as projects expand the land and rework undeveloped land.

This will provide additional space for in-ground and above-ground burials. The cemetery's ninth Columbarium Court was dedicated last year.

Just last month, the cemetery was named to the National Park Services' National Register of Historic Places.

Arlington is also in the process of becoming an arboretum, which involves labeling a portion of the trees.

"These very simply tell visitors what sort of trees they are as they walk by," Van Hoven said. "Most of those are going to be found along major walkways and tourist areas as you walk through the cemetery."

Labeled trees were picked based on their species and how noteworthy they are. For



Van Hoven



MEREDITH TIBBETTS/Stars and Stripes



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

example, two state championship trees at Arlington have special labels. There are also 36 memorial trees that serve as a living tribute to Medal of Honor recipients.

"It's a big honor and a big responsibility," Van Hoven said of working at the cemetery. "It can be a challenging place."

tibbetts.meredith@stripes.com

150 YEARS ON HALLOWED GROUND

Cemetery grounds



11. Rough Riders memorial
12. Argonne Cross
13. U.S. Coast Guard memorial
14. USS Serpens memorial
15. Columbarium
16. Niche wall
17. Pentagon memorial

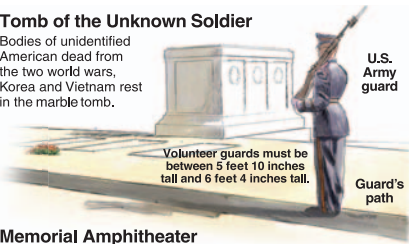
1. Arlington House (Robert E. Lee's home)
2. Civil War Unknowns graves
3. Kennedy gravesites
4. President W.H. Taft grave
5. Tomb of the Unknowns
6. Women in Military Service for America Memorial
7. Amphitheater
8. Visitor center
9. McClellan Gate
10. Beirut barracks memorial



SOURCES: Third United States Infantry, Arlington National Cemetery, Pentagon Library, Military District of Washington

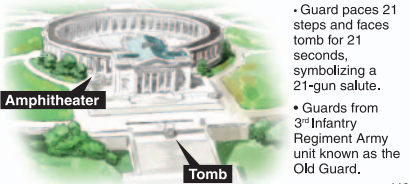
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Bodies of unidentified American dead from the two world wars, Korea and Vietnam rest in the marble tomb.



Memorial Amphitheater

Tomb is guarded 24 hours a day, every day, in all weather.



- Guard paces 21 steps and faces tomb for 21 seconds, symbolizing a 21-gun salute.
- Guards from 3rd Infantry Regiment Army unit known as the Old Guard.

MCT

ARLINGTON THE NUMBERS

400,000

active duty servicemembers, veterans and their families are buried there

7,000

services held each year, with 27-30 each weekday and six to eight on Saturdays

624

acres of cemetery

24

lingering notes of "Taps"

'You are still dealing with death'

BY MEREDITH TIBBETTS
Stars and Stripes

When families are at their most vulnerable, huddling together and recalling the memory of their recently deceased over a new grave, the caretakers of Arlington National Cemetery fade into the background. But behind the scenes, they provide one of the most important tasks: They bury the dead.

Jeffrey Lee spent three years as a caretaker at Arlington before being promoted to his current position as a cemetery representative. The job, he said, is emotionally and physically demanding.

"As a caretaker we covered pretty much everything from interments to inurnments, closing the gravesites, setting up gravesites, all preparation for funeral services. We replace headstones. We make sure graves are closed properly and covered up."

Lee, who is a native of the Washington, D.C., area, started out as a caretaker contractor with a company for about five years, and when his contract job came to Arlington, he said he instantly fell in love with the place.

After the company lost the contract, a new company picked it up and Lee moved to that company to stay with Arlington. A few months later he was working directly for Arlington.

"This is one of the few places that I could see a career coming out of it," said Lee, 41.

Being a cemetery representative is less hands-on than his role as a caretaker. He no longer repairs graves; instead he makes direct contact with the family of the deceased.



Jeffrey Lee, a former caretaker and current cemetery representative, poses at Arlington National Cemetery.

The day before a funeral, he calls the family to introduce himself, make a connection and to make it less awkward on the day of burial when they meet in the family room.

"Grief comes in all different types. Some people are angry. Some people laugh to hide the grief. Some people just take it harshly. It's knowing people and

knowing how to deal in those situations," that are key to his job, Lee said.

From a caretaker's perspective, you deal with families as well, but in a different way, he said. He said you see first-hand the families grieving over a headstone.

Lee never served in the military. "I think every service, every branch of service, makes me feel

like I wished I could have served. "This place is so rich in history," he said.

But no funeral is ever easy. "At the end of the day, you are still dealing with death," he said. "Even when a family comes in and they are in a good mood, you know deep inside they are in pain."

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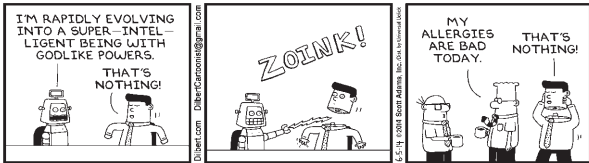


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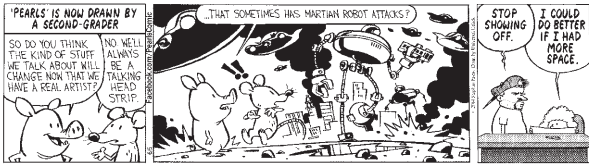
Frazz



Dilbert



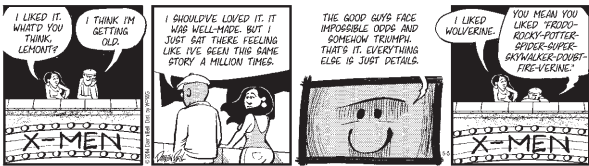
Pearls Before Swine



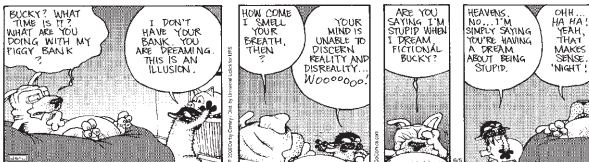
Non Sequitur



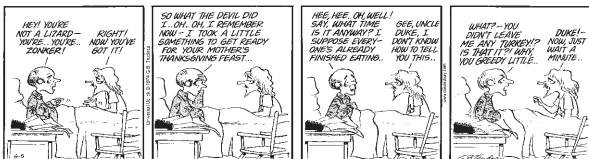
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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| 51 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 56 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 59 | | | | | | | | | | |

ACROSS

1 Young fellow

4 Tranquil

8 Initial stake

12 Altar affirmative

13 Theater trophy

14 Man of the manor

15 Despondency

17 Stentorian

18 Saturn model

19 "Hogwash!"

21 Popcorn enhancer

24 Witnessed

25 Pismire

28 Carpet

28 Harass

32 1/8 quart

34 Prohibit

36 Nickelodeon's explorer

37 Surf-and-turf component

39 Pickle

41 Felon's flight

42 Cage piece

44 Her last movie was 1949's "A Kiss for Corliss"

46 Crazy

50 Homer's interjection

51 Astringing

52 Limestone variety

56 Actress Anderson

57 Merriment

58 Zero

59 Inspiration of a

DOWN

1 Cover

2 Fuss

3 Role for Harrison or Murphy

4 Intersection

5 — Dhabi

6 Branch

7 Smaller plateaus

8 Permissible

9 Middy

10 Verifiable

11 Vortex

16 Speck

20 Science workshop

21 Luggage

22 One

23 Abrade

27 Talk on and on

29 Miami team

30 Exam format

31 Set component

33 Wyoming city

35 Eccentric

38 Family

40 Starts over

43 Tin star

45 Mid-May honoree

46 Soother

47 Brotherly baseball surname

48 Convent group

49 Unaccompanied

53 Cariou of Broadway

54 Piece of advice

55 Nevada city

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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| U | P | I | A | S | E | A | A | G | U | E |
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| P | L | A | Z | A | E | A | T | | | |
| | | | E | L | S | A | P | E | T | E |
| T | O | P | N | O | T | C | H | R | U | L |
| A | P | E | G | A | T | O | S | B | E | L |
| N | I | N | A | T | O | P | H | E | A | V |
| G | E | T | U | P | R | E | A | L | | |
| | | | S | O | S | T | I | G | E | R |
| T | O | P | S | E | C | R | E | T | A | G |
| A | L | A | I | A | I | D | E | Z | A | P |
| M | E | T | E | M | O | O | R | A | D | E |

6-5

CRYPTOQUIP

PUSC VZZQ-FOA MEZHA UHC

YFPPTZ CF UHEA SP LSYUP

MEZHQ CFLZFTZ'C PZZPU. OZP

PUZ MSPZE MZVHEZ!

Yesterday's Cryptquip: AFTER THE GUY GOT MARRIED TO THE DAIRYMAID, HE HABITUALLY REFERRED TO HER AS HIS BUTTER HALF.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: C equals S

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Before recalls, safety low priority at GM

By Tom Krisher
The Associated Press

DETROIT — To understand how General Motors allowed a problem with a small part to balloon into a crisis, look at the organization chart.

As of early last year, the director of vehicle safety was four rungs down the ladder from the CEO, according to a copy of the chart obtained by The Associated Press. Finance, sales and public relations had a direct path to the top.

"What's a higher priority than product safety?" asks Yale University management and law professor Jonathan Macey, author of a book on corporate governance. "The organization chart does obviously reflect a company's priorities."

That structure — as well as what new CEO Mary Barra has called a culture that valued cost savings over safety — is likely to be a prime target in a report expected this week from former U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas. He was hired by GM to investigate why



As of early last year, GM's director of vehicle safety was four rungs down the ladder from the CEO, according to a copy of the chart obtained by The Associated Press.

the company took more than a decade to recall millions of cars with a defective ignition switch that has now been linked to at least 13 deaths.

Ford and Chrysler, GM's main Detroit competitors, have safety directors higher on their charts than GM does.

Management experts interviewed by the AP say safety ranks higher at other companies as well, especially food, drug and chemical makers. At some, the safety chief has direct access to the CEO.

It's unclear if the report will discuss the role of top managers in the crisis. Up to now, no evidence has emerged to suggest that top GM executives knew about the switch problem before late last year.

Internal investigations typically blame the bureaucracy, not the bureaucrats, says Erik Gordon, a business and law professor at the University of Michigan.

"Generally they come up with something that looks good enough to the outside world without damaging top management," Gordon says.

Valukas is expected to recommend streamlining the bureaucracy so employees can more easily report problems to top officials. Barra has already taken steps in that direction. Among them:

■ She moved the safety chief up one level and gave the job to Jeff Boyer, a longtime GM engineer. Boyer says he has been provided access to Barra and one of

her top lieutenants.

■ Instead of a series of committees, one five-person body makes recall decisions.

■ Barra started a campaign to encourage workers to speak up when they see safety problems that aren't being addressed.

Kathryn Harrigan, professor of business leadership at Columbia University, suggests that GM's board form a safety committee to review issues, as is the practice at some food and chemical companies.

MARKET WATCH

June 3, 2014

Dow Jones
Industrials -21.29
16,722.34

Nasdaq
composite -3.12
4,234.08

Standard &
Poor's 500 -0.73
1,924.24

Russell
2000 -2.75
1,126.15

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates
Euro costs (June 5) \$1.3988
Dollar buys (June 5) €0.7149
British pound (June 5) \$1.72
Japanese yen (June 5) ¥99.00
South Korean won (June 5) ₩998.00

Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar) 0.3770
British pound \$1.6752
Canada (Dollar) 1.0938
China (Yuan) 6.2999
Denmark (Krone) 6.4614
Egypt (Pound) 1.1588
Euro \$1.3616/0.7345
Hong Kong (Dollar) 7.528
Hungary (Forint) 223.99
Israel (Sheqel) 3.4787
Japan (Yen) 102.58
Kuwait (Dinar) 0.2822
Norway (Krone) 5.9961
Philippines (Peso) 43.90
Poland (Zloty) 3.04
Saudi Arabia (Riyal) 3.7507
Singapore (Dollar) 1.2572
South Korea (Won) 1,025.52
Switzerland (Franc) 0.8966
Thailand (Baht) 32.67
Turkey (Lira) 1.1192

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies except the dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate 3.25
Discount rate 3.75
Federal funds market rate 0.09
3-month bill 0.03
30-year bond 3.44

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Thursday's US temperatures

| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr |
|-------------------|----|----|-------|------------------|-----|----|-------|--------------|-----|----|-------|---------------|-----|----|-------|
| Ablene, Texas | 99 | 73 | Cl | Chattanooga | 88 | 71 | Cl | Fort Wayne | 72 | 51 | PCldy | Louisville | 77 | 65 | PCldy |
| Akron, Ohio | 69 | 53 | Cl | Cheney | 71 | 48 | PCldy | Fresno | 98 | 65 | Cl | Lubbock | 100 | 70 | PCldy |
| Albany, N.Y. | 63 | 43 | PCldy | Chicago | 71 | 51 | Cl | Goodland | 79 | 59 | Cl | Macon | 93 | 69 | PCldy |
| Albuquerque | 96 | 64 | Cl | Cincinnati | 75 | 59 | PCldy | Grand Rapids | 72 | 50 | Cl | Madison | 80 | 67 | PCldy |
| Allentown, Pa. | 73 | 61 | Rain | Cleveland | 66 | 53 | Cl | Grand Rapids | 72 | 50 | Cl | Medford | 86 | 62 | Cl |
| Amarillo | 92 | 66 | Cl | Colorado Springs | 73 | 53 | Cl | Great Falls | 65 | 46 | PCldy | Memophis | 87 | 74 | Cl |
| Anchorage | 64 | 49 | Cl | Columbia, S.C. | 97 | 72 | PCldy | Green Bay | 88 | 68 | Cl | Midland-Odesa | 102 | 72 | Cl |
| Asheville | 82 | 63 | Cl | Columbus, Ga. | 73 | 57 | PCldy | Harrisburg | 76 | 63 | Cl | Milwaukee | 67 | 48 | Cl |
| Atlanta | 88 | 71 | PCldy | Concord, N.H. | 65 | 54 | Rain | Hartford | 67 | 49 | Rain | Mpls-St. Paul | 75 | 58 | PCldy |
| Atlantic City | 81 | 66 | Rain | Corpus Christi | 91 | 74 | PCldy | Helena | 74 | 58 | Cl | Missoula | 88 | 70 | PCldy |
| Austin | 88 | 72 | Cl | Dallas-Ft. Worth | 97 | 72 | Cl | Honolulu | 86 | 75 | Cl | Mobile | 88 | 70 | PCldy |
| Baltimore | 82 | 66 | Cl | Dayton | 73 | 55 | PCldy | Houston | 92 | 74 | Cl | Montgomery | 92 | 70 | Cl |
| Baton Rouge | 92 | 72 | PCldy | Daytona Beach | 89 | 69 | PCldy | Huntsville | 86 | 71 | Cl | Nashville | 84 | 72 | Cl |
| Bilings | 74 | 53 | PCldy | Denver | 78 | 53 | PCldy | Indianapolis | 73 | 59 | PCldy | New Orleans | 88 | 73 | PCldy |
| Birmingham | 89 | 73 | PCldy | Des Moines | 76 | 56 | PCldy | Jacksonville | 91 | 73 | PCldy | New York City | 70 | 64 | Rain |
| Bismark | 80 | 54 | Cl | Detroit | 71 | 50 | PCldy | Juneau | 61 | 44 | Cl | Newark | 73 | 65 | PCldy |
| Boise | 82 | 50 | Cl | Duluth | 69 | 48 | Cl | Kansas City | 74 | 62 | Cl | Norfolk, Va. | 88 | 70 | Cl |
| Boston | 63 | 57 | Cl | El Paso | 105 | 78 | Cl | Key West | 72 | 61 | Cl | North Platte | 78 | 56 | Cl |
| Bridgeport | 70 | 62 | Rain | Elkins | 72 | 60 | Rain | Key West | 72 | 61 | Cl | Oklahoma City | 87 | 79 | Cl |
| Brownsville | 91 | 75 | PCldy | Erie | 65 | 52 | Cl | Knoxville | 86 | 71 | Cl | Omaha | 78 | 60 | PCldy |
| Buffalo | 64 | 51 | Cl | Eugene | 73 | 43 | PCldy | Lake Charles | 90 | 75 | PCldy | Orlando | 93 | 69 | PCldy |
| Burlington, Vt. | 78 | 63 | PCldy | Evansville | 78 | 63 | PCldy | Lansing | 72 | 51 | PCldy | Paducah | 80 | 67 | PCldy |
| Caribou, Maine | 67 | 55 | Rain | Fairbanks | 66 | 46 | Cl | Las Vegas | 101 | 74 | Cl | Pendleton | 81 | 51 | PCldy |
| Charleston, S.C. | 93 | 71 | Cl | Fargo | 80 | 60 | Rain | Lincoln | 79 | 60 | PCldy | Pewaukee | 85 | 65 | PCldy |
| Charleston, W.Va. | 78 | 63 | Cl | Flagstaff | 80 | 39 | Cl | Little Rock | 89 | 72 | Cl | Philadelphia | 79 | 66 | Rain |
| Charlotte, N.C. | 89 | 70 | Rain | Fort Smith | 88 | 73 | Cl | Los Angeles | 78 | 63 | PCldy | Phoenix | 110 | 78 | Cl |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Pittsburgh | 73 | 59 | Rain |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

National temperature extremes
Hi: Tues., 109, El Paso, Texas
Lo: Tues., 25, Mammoth Lakes, Calif.


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WORLD CUP

US formation remains work in progress

Klinsmann's tinkering puts Dempsey, Bradley into more attacking spots

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — When the U.S. soccer team talks strategy, it sounds a bit like people picking lottery numbers or the start of a keno game: 4-4-2, 4-2-3-1, 4-3-3.

Two weeks before the Americans' World Cup opener, they're still tinkering with their formation.

"There's no such thing as a best system," U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann said. "It's the whole team, how it shapes up and how it works as an entire unit, how it attacks collectively and how it defends collectively."

After replacing Bob Bradley as the Americans' coach in July 2011, Klinsmann most often used a 4-2-3-1 formation: four defenders with two defensive midfielders in front of them. Higher up the field were three advanced midfielders supporting a lone forward.

Jozy Altidore usually was the striker when Klinsmann had his full player pool available, and Clint Dempsey was in the central attacking midfield role or advanced to a withdrawn forward.

But Klinsmann switched to a 4-4-2 for last month's exhibition against Mexico with a diamond midfield that pushed midfielder Michael Bradley into an attacking position and moved Dempsey closer to goal, where he could link better with Altidore.

"It's important to mix it up," Dempsey said. "In the past, maybe I was more withdrawn at times. I'm trying to also be up there and be next to him in terms of just not having him be the only guy that's up top."

Bradley scored the opener in the 2-2 tie against Mexico and assisted on a goal by Chris Wondolowski, who started on a day Altidore remained with Sunderland in England.

In Sunday's 2-1 exhibition win over Turkey, Bradley set up Fabian Johnson's goal with a brilliant chip on a one-to-one exchange. Dempsey scored the second goal when a defender failed to clear a cross by left back Timmy Chandler.

But with Bradley farther up the field and Jermaine Jones alone in front of the defense, Turkey had a half-dozen good scoring chances in the first half. Klinsmann then told Bradley to drop back into a flat four midfield alongside Kyle Beckerman in the second half. Still, Bradley had to get higher when the Americans attacked, and a heat map shows he ran constantly between the penalty areas.

"My role? Is in the center of the field, in the center of the middle," Bradley said. "I try to do as much as possible to help the team, whether it's scoring goals, setting up goals, winning tackles, intercepting balls. I try to have as big an impact on the game as



U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann, center, talks to forwards Jozy Altidore, left, and Clint Dempsey during a workout last Saturday. Klinsmann's switch to a 4-4-2 diamond formation puts Dempsey up top, where he could link better with Altidore. Previously Altidore was the lone forward.

'My role? Is in the center of the field, in the center of the middle. I try to do as much as possible to help the team, whether it's scoring goals, setting up goals, winning tackles, intercepting balls. I try to have as big an impact on the game as possible.'

Michael Bradley
US midfielder



possible. I think when you look around the world now, midfielders who can do everything are so important for their team, so that's what I try to do."

Bradley, the 26-year-old son of the former coach, has developed into the engine of the U.S. team. "I think we're starting to see more of the full Michael Brad-

ley," Altidore said. "You saw what he could do on the defensive side. He's very good at winning tackles and distributing the ball. Going forward, he's also very good."

The U.S. has just two more big tests before leaving for Brazil: an exhibition against Nigeria on Saturday at Jacksonville, Fla., followed by a scrimmage against

Belgium on June 12. The Americans open on June 16 against Ghana, which eliminated the U.S. from the past two World Cups — then play Portugal and Cristiano Ronaldo six days later. The Americans close the first round against three-time champion Germany.

"You can win a tournament like Spain did two years ago, play a 4-6-0, leave all the strikers out and have midfielders that score all the goals," Klinsmann said. "Systems in the near future have no meaning anymore, really."

Notes: Chandler transferred from relegated Nuremberg to Eintracht Frankfurt, his original club, agreeing to a three-year contract. ... A day after arriving in Jacksonville, players went for a pre-breakfast run on a beach. ... MLS has an all-time high 21 players on World Cup rosters, up from six in 2010 and its most since 19 in 1998. While 19 players were from the U.S. in 1998, 10 are from the U.S. this year.

AP Sports Writers Rachel Cohen and Jan McCauley contributed to this report.

Did you know

The 4-4-2 diamond removes the two outside midfielders, electing to play with four central midfielders.



SOURCE: USA Today.com

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NHL PLAYOFFS

Kings' Quick comes through when it counts

By LANCE PUGMIRE
Los Angeles Times

So much has changed around Jonathan Quick this postseason.

But for Game 1 of the Stanley Cup finals against the New York Rangers set for Wednesday at Staples Center, his approach remained the same.

As the defense-minded Los Angeles Kings have been confronted in the playoffs by three of the Western Conference's top four scoring teams, they adjusted with a more offensive effort, increasing their regular-season scoring average by nearly a full goal.

That left Quick more vulnerable to the odd-man rushes and wide-open hockey the Kings usually prevented in the regular season, when they gave up the fewest goals in the NHL.

"There's times we haven't played our best and left him hung out to dry," Kings defense-man

Alec Martinez said, with playoff opponents scoring an average of 2.86 goals per game against Quick. His regular-season average was 2.07.

But such turbulence hasn't distracted Quick from winning.

"With big saves at the right time, he's been huge for us," Kings goaltender coach Bill Ranford said. "Look at all three series. When we've needed him, he's there."

In Game 7 of the conference finals at defending champion Chicago, the Kings answered a 2-0 deficit with two goals.

Then, 12 seconds later, a shot by Blackhawks forward Patrick Sharp took a bad bounce off the ice and found its way past

Quick.

"A large number of goalies collapse after that one," Ranford said. "His mental capabilities to forget have been unbelievable in this playoff run."

Quick stopped 33 of Chicago's next 34 shots, including a point-blank shot in the final seconds of regulation, helping the Kings to a 5-4 overtime win.

"Just because it's a Game 7 ... if you give up a couple goals, or a weird bounce, because of your

"With big saves at the right time, he's been huge for us. Look at all three series. When we've needed him, he's there."

Bill Ranford

Los Angeles Kings goaltending coach

preparation all year and throughout your career, you should be the same and handle it the same as any situation," Quick said Tuesday during Stanley Cup media day at Staples Center.

Quick stared down a team-wide meltdown that saw him pulled in Game 2 of the first-round series against San Jose, when the Sharks scored 17 goals in the first three games. Quick's response: only two goals allowed in the final three games of the rally from a three-games-to-none hole.

"When he's on, he makes saves that you don't really expect," Rangers center Brian Boyle said. "He's pretty acrobatic and ... they feed off that. He can bail them out."

Against the Ducks in Game 7, he stopped Anaheim goals leader Corey Perry with a poke-check on a penalty shot, providing momentum that led to a rout.

Similarly against Chicago, Quick gloved a wide-open Brent Seabrook shot that would have given the Blackhawks a 3-0 lead in Game 2, and the Kings responded with the next six goals and a

run of three wins.

"You just try to make the next save," Quick said of giving up goals. "I don't think that (Seabrook) moment was any different than all season, all playoffs."

"Whether it's Game 7 or a game in December ... if you're not approaching those games in December like you approach [playoff games], you're leaving your team short, no? Every time, you prepare as if you're going to give everything you can. The repetition of that ... you do that enough throughout the regular season, that gets you to the postseason, and because you've prepared for those games, it gives you a little advantage in this time of the year."

In the opposing net for the team Quick watched as a child in Connecticut will be Henrik Lundqvist. The Rangers goalie knows his adversary's work.

"He's extremely aggressive, like a gymnast out there," Lundqvist said.

Rangers defenseman Ryan McDonagh, who was a teammate of Quick on the U.S. Olympic team, said the goalies are comparable.

"You don't see (Quick) get rattled very much," McDonagh said. "Just gets ready for the next faceoff. Very similar in that aspect of just letting things go quickly."

Los Angeles Kings goalie Jonathan Quick has a .906 save percentage during the playoffs this season.

WALLY SKALLI, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT



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Rangers, Kings ready for big Stanley Cup finish

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MLB SCOREBOARD

American League

| East Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|-------|
| Toronto | 25 | 24 | .593 | |
| Baltimore | 27 | 21 | .561 | 4 1/2 |
| New York | 29 | 20 | .595 | 5 |
| Seattle | 27 | 21 | .466 | 7 1/2 |
| Los Angeles | 27 | 21 | .466 | 7 1/2 |
| Philadelphia | 27 | 21 | .466 | 7 1/2 |

| Central Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|------------------|----|----|------|-------|
| Cleveland | 30 | 15 | .674 | — |
| Chicago | 30 | 15 | .500 | 4 |
| Minnesota | 27 | 18 | .496 | 5 1/2 |
| Kansas City | 28 | 19 | .483 | 5 |
| St. Louis | 28 | 19 | .483 | 5 |

| West Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |

National League

| East Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|-------|
| Atlanta | 30 | 28 | .517 | 1 1/2 |
| Miami | 30 | 28 | .517 | 1 1/2 |
| Washington | 28 | 30 | .483 | 3 1/2 |
| Philadelphia | 24 | 32 | .429 | 6 1/2 |

| Central Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|------------------|----|----|------|-------|
| Milwaukee | 35 | 24 | .593 | — |
| St. Louis | 29 | 29 | .500 | 5 1/2 |
| Pittsburgh | 28 | 28 | .483 | 6 1/2 |
| Cincinnati | 28 | 28 | .483 | 6 1/2 |
| Chicago | 21 | 34 | .382 | 12 |

| West Division | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|--------|
| San Francisco | 31 | 25 | .552 | — |
| Los Angeles | 31 | 25 | .552 | — |
| Cincinnati | 28 | 28 | .483 | 6 1/2 |
| San Diego | 26 | 33 | .441 | 11 1/2 |
| Arizona | 24 | 34 | .414 | 14 |

Monday's games

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cleveland 3, Boston 2 | |
| Los Angeles 10, N.Y. Yankees 2 | |
| N.Y. Mets 11, Philadelphia 2 | |
| Los Angeles 5, St. Louis 3 | |
| Milwaukee 6, Minnesota 2 | |
| Los Angeles 5, St. Louis 3 | |
| LA Dodgers 5, Chicago White Sox 2 | |

Tuesday's games

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cleveland 5, Boston 3 | |
| Los Angeles 5, N.Y. Yankees 2 | |
| Los Angeles 5, Detroit 3 | |
| Baltimore 8, Texas 5 | |
| Houston 7, LA Angels 2 | |
| Washington 7, Philadelphia 0 | |
| Cincinnati 8, San Francisco 3 | |
| Seattle 7, Atlanta 5 | |
| Los Angeles 3, Tampa Bay 1 | |
| Kansas City 4, St. Louis 3 | |
| Los Angeles 4, Colorado 2 | |
| Minnesota 4, Milwaukee 4 | |
| Los Angeles 4, Colorado 2 | |
| Chicago White Sox 4, LA Dodgers 1 | |
| Pittsburgh 3, San Diego 1 | |

Wednesday's games

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Boston at Cleveland | |
| Baltimore at N.Y. Yankees | |
| Toronto at Detroit | |
| Los Angeles at Houston | |
| Seattle at Atlanta | |
| Philadelphia at Washington | |
| Miami at Tampa Bay | |
| San Francisco at Cincinnati | |
| LA Angels at Chicago | |
| Milwaukee at Minnesota | |
| St. Louis at Kansas City | |
| Los Angeles at Colorado | |
| Chicago White Sox at LA Dodgers | |

Thursday's games

| | |
|--|--|
| Oakland (Pomerantz 5-2) at N.Y. Yankees (Tanaka 4-1) | |
| Toronto (Hagg 4-2) at Detroit (Verlander 4-4) | |
| LA Angels (Skaas 4-2) at Houston (Peacock 4-4) | |
| Baltimore (Mil-Gonzalez 3-4) at Texas (Lincecum 4-4) | |
| Oakland (Bumgarner 7-3) at Cincinnati (Leake 3-4) | |
| Washington (Kendrick 1-5) at Washington (Fister 3-1) | |
| N.Y. Mets (Turner 3-1) at Tampa (Cabrera 2-5) | |
| Los Angeles (Grom 2-0) at Chicago (Cotton 2-5) | |
| Milwaukee (Wepert 4-4) at Minnesota (Cotton 2-5) | |
| Los Angeles (Arroyo 4-4) at Colorado (Nicasio 5-5) | |

Friday's games

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| Los Angeles 5, Houston 2 | |
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| Los Angeles 5, Houston 2 | |

Saturday's games

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Sunday's games

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Monday's games

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Tuesday's games

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Wednesday's games

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Thursday's games

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| Los Angeles 5, Houston 2 | |

Athletics 5, Yankees 2 (10)

| Oakland | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |

| Oakland | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |

Oakland

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| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |

New York

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| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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Oakland

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New York

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|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Oakland | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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Oakland

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|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
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| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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Oakland

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| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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Oakland

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| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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New York

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|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Oakland | 36 | 22 | .621 | — |
| Los Angeles | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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| Seattle | 30 | 28 | .517 | 6 |
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| Houston | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |

Oakland

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| Yankees | 25 | 34 | .424 | 11 1/2 |
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New York

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| | IP | H | R | ER | BB |
| Pittsburgh | | | | | |
| Cole W,6-3 | 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| J.Hughes H,3 | $\frac{3}{4}$ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Watson H,15 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Melancon H,11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grilli S,9-12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MLB

Interleague roundup

Marlins extend Rays' skid to 8

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Marlins pitcher Henderson Alvarez heard a teammate yell and realized he had been caught by surprise. Desperate for a run, the Tampa Bay Rays were attempting a delayed steal.

So he wheeled toward second base and threw yet another strike.

The right-hander had good command all night long, needing only 88 pitches to toss an eight-hitter for his third shutout this year. He beat Tampa Bay 1-0 on Tuesday, sending the reeling Rays home after a winless eight-game trip.

"Henderson took that game over," Miami manager Mike Redmond said. "That was fun to watch."

The only run scored when Christian Yelich walked on a 3-2 slider with two out and the bases loaded in the fifth inning.

Alvarez (3-3) struck out five and walked none in his third consecutive scoreless outing, a stretch covering 10 innings. He retired his last five batters to close out the win in 2 hours, 10 minutes.

"My sinker was working, and thankfully the batters were swinging early," Alvarez said through a translator. "That determines the

brevery of the game. I was attacking the strike zone, and they were attacking as well."

Alvarez's three shutouts lead the majors. He had been 0-5 in five previous career starts against the Rays, but this time he faced a team in a miserable slump.

Kevin Kiermaier had the Rays' only extra-base hit when he tripled with two out in the third. They went 0-for-3 with runners in scoring position and are hitless in their past 22 at-bats in those situations.

"We're just not able to find that hole," Evan Longoria said. "We just have to keep going, keep fighting, stay positive through the tough times."

The Rays' eight-game losing streak is their longest since 2009. They've lost 10 straight road games while being outscored 52-19.

Tampa Bay hit into three double plays — one on a sacrifice attempt — and had two runners caught stealing, including Yulies Escobar on the delayed steal attempt in the fifth. He singled with one out and took off for second when Alvarez had the ball on the mound before the next batter stepped to the plate, prompting catcher Jeff Mathis to holler at his pitcher.



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

The Tampa Bay Rays' David DeJesus, right, is tagged out by Miami Marlins second baseman Endy Chavez while attempting to steal second during the fourth inning of the Marlins' 1-0 victory Tuesday in Miami.

"Escobar caught me by surprise," Alvarez said. "What alerted me was Mathis' scream. An easy out. A gift."

Chris Archer (3-3) allowed only five hits in seven innings, but Rays starters remained winless in the past 16 games, mostly because of poor run support.

Mariners 7, Braves 5: John Buck had three hits, including a two-run homer in the seventh inning that gave visiting Seattle the lead, as it rallied to beat Atlanta for its fourth straight win.

The Braves led 4-0 in the first inning and 5-2 in the second before falling to the Mariners' comeback.

White Sox 4, Dodgers 1: Jose Abreu homered for the second straight game and Tyler Flowers also went deep to lead visiting Chicago over Los Angeles.

Yasiel Puig went 2-for-4 with a double for the Dodgers on the one-year anniversary of his major league debut.

Twins 6, Brewers 4: Josh Willingham hit a three-run homer and

Minnesota won a game delayed by a fans fall into Milwaukee's bullpen.

Willingham connected in the third off Yovani Gallardo (3-4) for a 4-1 lead. Samuel Deduno (2-3) got the win and Glen Perkins earned his 15th save.

Royals 8, Cardinals 7: Eric Hosmer hit a tiebreaking single off closer Trevor Rosenthal in the ninth inning and visiting Kansas City earned its second straight road victory over St. Louis in the four-game, two-city series.

AL roundup

Indians top Red Sox for 5th straight win

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Cleveland Indians manager Terry Francona likes to talk about grind-it-out wins. Tuesday night's 5-3 victory over the Boston Red Sox fit that category perfectly.

Michael Bourn's two-run double in the seventh inning snapped a 3-3 all tie and extended Cleveland's winning streak to a season-high five straight games.

The Indians scored three runs on five straight hits in the first off Jake Peavy, but couldn't add to the lead and the Red Sox tied the game in the seventh. The deadlock didn't last long.

"We played a good game," Francona said. "I thought we had to. We strung together a number of hits (in the first), then you're kind of hanging on for dear life. When they came back, we came back."

Cleveland (29-30) can get back to 500 for the first time since April 24 if it can complete a three-game sweep Wednesday. The Indians have made up six games in the AL Central standings since May 18 and trail first-place Detroit by 4½ games.

Francona always stresses to his

players to take things one day at a time.

"That's the only way you can dig yourself out of a hole," he said.

"It can look so daunting when you look too far in advance, but when you take care of what you're supposed to do that day, all of a sudden things can mount in a good way."

Nick Hagadone (1-0) struck out three in 1½ innings. Cody Allen recorded the final four outs for his fifth save, striking out former Indians All-Star Grady Sizemore to end the game.

Peavy (1-3) allowed five runs in 6½ innings. The right-hander, who hasn't won since April 25, gave up three runs in the first, but held the Indians scoreless until the seventh.

Astros 7, Angels 2: Jon Singleton hit a towering three-run home debut as Houston beat visiting Los Angeles.

Jason Castro and Robbie Grossman drove in two runs apiece as the Astros took the lead with a five-run third inning.

Orioles 8, Rangers 3: Nelson Cruz hit a towering three-run homer in his return to Texas, cap-



TONY DEJAK/AP

The Cleveland Indians' Michael Bourn watches the ball after hitting a two-run double during the seventh inning of Tuesday's 5-3 victory over the Red Sox in Cleveland.

ping a six-run eighth inning, as visiting Baltimore won its third straight game.

Athletics 5, Yankees 2: Brandon Moss hit his second homer of the game leading off the 10th inning, and visiting Oakland rallied for the road win over New York.

Blue Jays 5, Tigers 3: Brett Lawrie's three-run homer highlighted a big burst in the ninth innig as Toronto beat host Detroit.

J.D. Martinez hit a three-run homer with two outs in the ninth for the Tigers. Casey Janssen came on and struck out Don Kelly for his ninth save in 10 chances.

NL roundup

Mesoraco, Bruce power Reds to win over Giants

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Jay Bruce hadn't driven in a run in more than a month. He finally got a notable RBI and kept Cincinnati's winning streak going.

Bruce drove in a pair of runs and Devin Mesoraco hit a two-run homer Tuesday night, leading the Reds to a season-high fourth straight win, an 8-3 victory over the sloppy San Francisco Giants.

Mesoraco hit his ninth homer off Tim Lincecum (4-5), who has beaten the Reds during the playoffs but never during the regular season. Bruce, who spent time on the disabled list following surgery for torn knee cartilage, knocked in his first run since April 25.

The Reds' biggest shortcoming has been their inability to drive in runners. With Bruce back, they've got a chance to fix the problem. "It was nice seeing him do what he does," manager Bryan Price said. "It was really good to see him get a couple of hits."

Homer Bailey (6-3) went six innings in his first game against the Giants since his no-hitter against them last July 2 at Great American Ball Park. The right-hander gave up three runs and five hits,

including Hunter Pence's homer, double and single.

"We scored early," Bailey said. "They hit some balls and got some men on base, but I was able to limit the damage and I found a groove."

Pirates 4, Padres 1: Pedro Alvarez and Neil Walker hit home runs to back Gerrit Cole's solid outing as visiting Pittsburgh defeated San Diego.

Cole (6-3) limited the Padres to one run and four hits in 5½ innings as the Pirates went to 6-1 in his last seven starts.

Nationals 7, Phillies 0: Jordan Zimmermann rebounded from a mini-slump to throw eight crisp innings for host Washington and Ryan Zimmerman hit a pair of doubles and handled two chances with aplomb in his debut in left field in a win over Philadelphia.

Cubs 2, Mets 1: Chris Coghlan homered in the eighth and Nate Schierholz hit a game-ending RBI single as host Chicago got by New York.

Diamondbacks 4, Rockies 2: Nick Evans and Chris Owings hit back-to-back homers for visiting Arizona and rookie Chase Anderson won his fourth straight start in beating Colorado.

SPORTS BRIEFS/FRENCH OPEN



JULIE JACOBSON/AP

Exercise rider Willie Delgado takes California Chrome around a turn on a second lap during a workout Wednesday at Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. The Belmont Stakes race is on Saturday.

Briefly

Chrome made 3-5 favorite

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — California Chrome became the 3-5 early favorite on Wednesday to win the Belmont Stakes and become American horse racing's 12th Triple Crown champion.

The Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes winner will break from the No. 2 post under Victor Espinoza on Saturday at Belmont Park. Eleven Belmont winners have come out of that post, the last being Tabasco Cat in 1994.

California Chrome will be listed No. 2 in the betting program, the same number as 1973 Triple Crown winner Secretariat, who won the Belmont by a record 31 lengths while setting a track record for the 1½-mile (2,400-meter) race that still stands.

Wicked Strong was the 6-1 second choice and drew post No. 9. The colt finished fourth after an unlucky trip in the Derby, sat out the Preakness, and comes into the Belmont off a five-week rest.

Tonalist was made the third betting choice at 8-1 odds and will break from the No. 11 post. The colt has experience on the track, having won the Peter Pan Stakes, although he is new to the Triple Crown trail.

Ride On Curlin, the 12-1 fourth choice, and 20-1 shot General a Rod are the only other horses besides California Chrome who will have run in all three legs of the Triple Crown.

Eleven horses were entered to take on California Chrome in his bid to win the Triple Crown for the first time since Affirmed swept the Derby, Preakness and Belmont in 1978.

Florida sweeps Alabama to win softball title

OKLAHOMA CITY — Kirsti

Merritt hit a 3-run homer, and Florida defeated Alabama 6-3 on Tuesday night to win its first NCAA softball championship.

The Gators (55-12) swept the championship series 2-0.

Jackie Traina, one of the nation's best pitchers, gave up five runs in 1½ innings before getting pulled for Alabama (53-13).

Marino withdraws from concussion lawsuit

MIAMI — Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Marino says he inadvertently became a plaintiff in a concussion lawsuit against the NFL and is withdrawing immediately.

Marino said he doesn't suffer any effects from head injuries.

"Within the last year I authorized a claim to be filed on my behalf, just in case I needed future medical coverage to protect me and my family in the event I later suffered from the effects of head trauma," Marino said in a statement Tuesday. "I did not realize I would be automatically listed as a plaintiff. ... I have made the decision it is not necessary for me to be part of any claims or this lawsuit, and therefore I am withdrawing as a plaintiff."

Marino's withdrawal costs the litigants a high-profile plaintiff. He was by far the best-known of 15 former players who filed a lawsuit in federal court in Philadelphia last week.

They joined more than 4,800 others who allege the NFL misled players about the long-term dangers of concussions. The league has denied those allegations.

The NFL and the original group of players agreed on a \$765 million settlement last August, but that deal was rejected by a federal judge in January.

Marino retired as the most prolific

passer in NFL history.

He worked as an analyst for CBS from 2002 to 2013 but wasn't retained for this season. He has had recent discussions with the Dolphins about a role in their front office, and a lawsuit might have complicated such a hiring.

Tide trustees approve Saban's \$55.2M deal

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama coach Nick Saban is a mere bonus or two from knocking down another salary barrier and becoming the \$7 million man.

A unanimous vote by the Alabama system trustees' compensation committee Tuesday made Saban's new 8-year, \$55.2 million deal official.

The 62-year-old Saban will make \$6.5 million in base pay and what the university describes as a "talent fee" plus a \$400,000 completion bonus for each year and other incentives.

It's a seven-figure raise over the eight-year contract worth about \$5.6 million annually he received in March 2012.

Wizards give Wittman contract extension

WASHINGTON — Wizards coach Randy Wittman signed a contract extension Tuesday after leading the team to the playoffs for the first time since 2008.

With its young backcourt of John Wall and Bradley Beal, Washington beat the Chicago Bulls in the first round before losing to the Indiana Pacers in the Eastern Conference semifinals. The Wizards hadn't won a post-season series since 2005.

Wittman was promoted to head coach when Flip Saunders was fired in January 2012.

Petkovic, Halep into women's semis

By CHRIS LEHOURITES
The Associated Press

PARIS — Andrea Petkovic and Simona Halep completed the French Open semifinal pairings with straight-set wins Wednesday, and one of them will be in a Grand Slam final for the first time.

Petkovic, a 28th-seeded German, beat 2012 French Open runner-up Sara Errani of Italy 6-2, 6-2. The fourth-seeded Halep defeated 2009 champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, also 6-2, 6-2.

Neither Petkovic nor Halep has ever played in the semifinals of a Grand Slam tournament. But they will meet on Thursday with a spot in the final against either Maria Sharapova or Eugenie Bouchard on the line.

Later Wednesday, eight-time champion Rafael Nadal faced 2013 runner-up David Ferrer, while Andy Murray played Gael Monfils.

Monfils is trying to become the first Frenchman to win the title at Roland Garros since Yannick Noah in 1983.

Petkovic was first to complete her match on a wet day at Roland Garros. And although she had some trouble finding serve, her groundstrokes consistently landed near the lines, many of them for winners.

The match on Court Philippe Chatrier, the main stadium at Roland Garros, started under overcast skies after a three-hour delay. With Errani leading 2-1 but facing a break point, the rain returned.

Play continued despite the conditions and Petkovic broke with a forehand winner on her second break opportunity.

The drizzle continued until the changeover with Petkovic leading 5-2. By the time the second

Scoreboard

Wednesday

At Stade Roland Garros

Paris

Purse: \$34.12 million (Grand Slam)

Surface: Clay-Outdoor

Singles

Women

Quarterfinals

Simona Halep (4), Romania, def. Svetlana Kuznetsova (27), Russia, 6-2, 6-2.

Andrea Petkovic (28), Germany, def. Sara Errani (10), Italy, 6-2, 6-2.

Mixed Doubles

Semifinals

Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Germany, and Jean-Julien Rojer, Netherlands, def. Yaroslava Shvedova, Kazakhstan, and Bruno Soares (3), Brazil, 3-6, 7-6 (4), 10-8.

Julia Georges, Germany, and Nenad Zimonjic (8), Serbia, def. Timea Babos, Hungary, and Eric Butorac, United States, 6-2, 6-2.

set started, the sun was out.

Although Petkovic was broken to open each set, she won the final six games of the first set, and the final four games of the second.

Petkovic had been 0-3 in major quarterfinals, losing at that stage at the Australian Open, French Open and U.S. Open in 2011. Her ranking dropped after that, as low as 177th last year, because of a right knee injury.

Errani was the runner-up at Roland Garros in 2012, losing to Maria Sharapova. Last year, the 10th-seeded Italian reached the semifinals and lost to eventual champion Serena Williams.

Halep, the highest-seeded player remaining in the draw, lost in the quarterfinals at the Australian Open in January, her best previous performance at a Grand Slam tournament.

However, the Romanian has moved quickly up the rankings over the last year. In the last 13 months, she has won seven titles, second only to Serena Williams. But Halep is the only player to have won titles on clay, grass and hard courts during that stretch.



DARRIN VOJNOVIC/AP

Andrea Petkovic kisses her racket Wednesday after defeating Italy's Sara Errani during their quarterfinal match in Paris. Petkovic won 6-2, 6-2 to advance to her first semifinal in a Grand Slam.

NBA FINALS



SUE OGOROCKI/AP

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said talk about his team's dislike for any player or team was "silly."

Spurs refute claims team dislikes reigning champs

By RAUL DOMINGUEZ
The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — LeBron James has it all wrong. Gregg Popovich is a people person.

"I like everybody," the San Antonio Spurs coach said in response to James' comments that the Spurs don't like the Miami Heat.

Immediately after San Antonio beat Oklahoma City in Game 6 of the Western Conference finals to set up the NBA Finals rematch with the Heat that begins on Thursday, Tim Duncan said, "We've got four more to win. We'll do it this time."

The Spurs nearly did it last year, but coughed up a five-point lead in the final half-minute of regulation of Game 6 before losing Game 7. The agony of that loss, San Antonio's first in five trips to the finals, led James to surmise that the Spurs aren't very fond of the Heat.

"They don't like us. They don't," James said on Monday in Miami. "I can sense it from Timmy's comments over the last couple of days. They want us, so they got us."

The Spurs, whose demeanor and remarks are normally as plain as sandwich bread, were a bit taken back by James' reaction.

"Knowing Timmy, that's not trash talking," San Antonio's Tony Parker said. "I don't think he meant it like that. But obviously, we are very motivated and we want to get it done."

Spurs guard Manu Ginobili said the comment was taken completely out of context and "not a big deal at all." He and Parker both said the Spurs have great respect for what the Heat have accomplished, having never made it to consecutive NBA Finals until

'They don't like us. They don't. I can sense it from Timmy's comments over the last couple of days. They want us, so they got us.'

LeBron James
Miami Heat forward

this season.

San Antonio did so after a rugged postseason run in the Western Conference, escaping a seven-game series with Dallas before closing out Portland in five games, and Oklahoma City in six.

"Every time you play a team in the playoffs, you don't like them," Ginobili said. "That grows on you. It's such a challenge, you want to beat them so bad that you start to grow that challenge of you don't want the opponent to score on me, you don't want them to do good. You want to do everything you can to limit them. In some ways it's sort of dislike, but the same happened to me against Dallas and against Portland and against Oklahoma City. It's part of what the playoffs are about."

So any talk of dislike for a particular player or team was met with a glare.

"Are you really going to ask that?" Popovich said. "Somebody will say, 'I don't like him' and the other guy, 'So and so said they don't like you.' Well, I don't like him either." Come on, this is silly."

Rematch: Spurs, Heat league's first repeat finalists since 1997-98

FROM BACK PAGE

of fortitude. If I can compliment my own team humbly, to have that tough loss, especially the Game 6 and not have a pity party and come back this year and get back to the same position, I think that's fortitude."

It's the league's first Finals rematch since Chicago and Utah played in 1997 and 1998.

The teams have actually played three times since last season's classic series ended, twice in the regular season, another being a preseason meeting in Miami where the Spurs acknowledged that the pain of losing Game 7 on that floor was still real.

Then again, it's almost like they wanted to feel that hurt at times. Popovich showed the Spurs clips of Games 6 and 7 early in training camp this season, not so much to open old wounds but rather speed up the healing process.

"We were just trying to put it away, just get over that part of it, learn from it, and move forward from there," said Duncan, a champion in 1999, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

Move forward, they did. San Antonio won 62 games in the regular season, the best record in the league. One of those wins was a 24-point romp over Miami, on the same floor where this series will start on Thursday.

The Heat know what wanting revenge feels like. They lost the 2011 NBA Finals to Dallas, then opened the following season on the Mavericks' floor and simply blew them away.

Heat forward Chris Bosh called it "extra motivation" for the Spurs.

"It's just something that we have to deal with, and we know that they're going to be very passionate, and they're going to



AL DIAZ, MIAMI HERALD/MLT

The Heat's Chris Bosh catches a pass in the low post and is immediately swarmed by Spurs defenders in Game 7 of the 2013 NBA Finals. Bosh said the Heat's Finals will serve as extra motivation for the Spurs in this year's Finals, beginning Thursday.

play some good basketball," Bosh said. "So whoever we play, we just have to continue to keep our approach the same and play good basketball."

While the Spurs were punching their ticket by ousting Oklahoma City from the

West finals on Saturday night, the Heat were getting a day off. James was taking his kids to see X-Men. James Jones went to a home-improvement store for some supplies. Bosh insisted he was going to do as little as possible, and Heat coach Erik

Spoelstra didn't summon his team to practice again until Monday.

By then, James was locked in on the Spurs.

"It hasn't really hit us that much yet because I think we're in it," James said Friday night after Miami beat Indiana and clinched its fourth consecutive East championship. "I think it will once we're done and we're able to look back at what we were able to accomplish as players, as a franchise. I think that's when it will really hit us. We definitely don't take it for granted to be in this position."

So for the next few days, all the highlights of last year's Finals will be played over and over again.

The shot by Tony Parker — who missed the second half of Saturday night's game with a left ankle injury — to win Game 1 in Miami for the Spurs, James' twirl-on-the-rim dunk as the Heat pulled away in Game 2. San Antonio sharpshooter Danny Green's Finals-record three-point display. Bosh's rebound that led to Ray Allen's shot that saved Miami's season in Game 6. The yellow rope, the precursor to a Spurs celebration that never happened.

All made for an epic series.

The encore could be even better.

"Obviously we are very happy and pleased with the season we have had so far, but we are not by any means satisfied," Green said. "We know we have a lot of work to do against a very good team. There is a reason why they're back there and are two-time champs. We have our work cut out for us, but we are happy with going back — just not satisfied."

NBA FINALS

A position-by-position look at the matchups for the San Antonio Spurs vs. Miami Heat:

CENTER:
Tim Duncan
vs. **Chris Bosh**

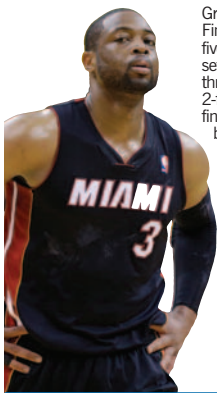


Edge:
Spurs



Bosh started the play that saved Miami's season last year in Game 6, grabbing an offensive rebound to set up Ray Allen's tying three-pointer. He then went scoreless in Game 7, but showed he could hurt the Spurs offensively with a pair of 24-point outings this season. Duncan, who had 23 on 9-for-13 shooting in both games, gets another crack at a fifth ring after a pair of misses from close range in the final minute helped doom the Spurs in Game 7 last year.

SHOOTING GUARD:
Danny Green vs. Dwyane Wade



Green was headed for an NBA Finals MVP award through five games last year, when he set the Finals record with 25 three-pointers, but he was only 2-for-11 behind the arc over the final two. Wade is showing the benefits of a schedule that featured plenty of rest for his sore knees during the regular season and is averaging 18.7 points on 52 percent shooting in the postseason after he had struggled leading into this round last year.

Edge:
Heat



COACHES: Gregg Popovich vs. Erik Spoelstra

The rare criticism Popovich was hearing for the lineup he had on the floor at the end of the Game 6 loss to the Heat last year has been forgotten. He won the Coach of the Year award for leading the Spurs to the NBA's best record, and remains considered the league's best coach. But Spoelstra will be within one title of him if he wins this series and always seems to make the right move for his team, from managing Wade's health to going small with Lewis against the Pacers.



SMALL FORWARD: LeBron James vs. Kawhi Leonard

Leonard goes on Kevin Durant in the West finals to James, the MVP of the past two NBA Finals. James had 37 points and 12 rebounds last year in Game 7, while Leonard was perhaps the Spurs' best player that night with 19 points and 16 boards. He forced James to shoot 6-for-18 in the Spurs' March 6 victory, but James won't be wearing the sleeved jerseys that he said affected him then.



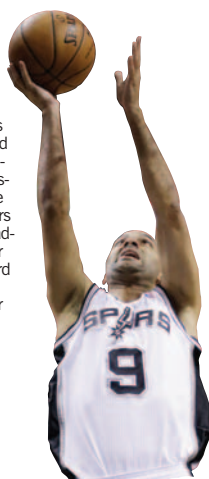
Edge: Heat

POINT GUARD:
Tony Parker vs. Mario Chalmers

Parker missed the second half of San Antonio's Game 6 clincher in the West finals with left ankle soreness, and the Spurs will need their All-Star to heal up before Thursday. Parker said Tuesday he plans to play. If so, the Spurs are back to having a clear advantage at the position after having to face Damian Lillard and Russell Westbrook in the past two rounds. Parker is averaging a team-leading 17.2 points and 4.9 assists this postseason.



Edge:
Spurs



POWER FORWARD:
Tiago Splitter/Matt Bonner/Boris Diaw vs. Rashard Lewis

Splitter had to go to the bench when the Spurs went small in the conference finals and Lewis got to start when the Heat did the same in their series, so it's unclear what the teams will do now. Diaw, who had 26 points in the finale of the Western Conference finals and averaged 15.5 against the Heat this season, might be the best option. Lewis hit nine three-pointers over the final two games of the East finals, so the Heat may want to stick with the hot hand.



Edge: Spurs

RESERVES: Manu Ginobili, Patty Mills and company vs. Ray Allen, Chris Andersen, Shane Battier and company

Ginobili is healthier and Mills is much improved off what appears to be a far stronger bench than San Antonio brought to the NBA Finals last year. Allen has had a strong postseason and Anderson hit all four shots in Game 6 against Indiana after missing the previous two games with a thigh injury.



Edge: Spurs



Edge: Spurs

NBA FINALS



JOE CAVARETTA, SUN SENTINEL/MCT

The Miami Heat had their fans behind them for Game 7 last year and claimed their second straight NBA championship with a 95-88 victory over San Antonio in Miami. If it goes seven games this year, however, Game 7 will be in San Antonio.

Spurs in prime position

San Antonio has home-court advantage in rematch

BY TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

When last season's NBA Finals ended, San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich was at a loss.

For a few minutes, that is. Popovich's first order of business after the season's final buzzer sounded in Miami was to go and embrace Erik Spoelstra, LeBron James and Dwyane Wade, giving everyone hearty hugs and offering genuine words of congratulations after the Heat topped his Spurs in Game 7 of one of the most dramatic, thrilling championship series in league history.

The pain of losing started setting in later, and lasted for months. But now, the dream scenario for San Antonio has arrived.

Starting Thursday, the Spurs get a rematch in the NBA Finals against the only team to ever beat them in a championship series. San Antonio will be holding home-court advantage, so if another Game 7 awaits, the Spurs will have the decided edge this time around. If that wasn't enough, the Spurs even got basically five full days between games to get healthy and prepare.

It is, without question, everything the Spurs could have wanted.

"We know what we're going against," said Spurs guard Tony Parker, who added that he has great respect for what the Heat have done in this four-year run. "It's a great challenge."

There are so many things that would seem like a distinct San Antonio advantage.

First, while everyone's better at home, the Spurs dominate in San Antonio, winning 103 times in their last 123 games there. Over the past four seasons, the Spurs are also 25-5 when having three or more days between games.

Maybe most importantly, having nearly a week between the end of the Western Conference finals and the start of the NBA Finals gives Parker plenty of time to get his ailing left ankle ready to go for Game 1.

"I'll do my best," said Parker, who didn't practice Tuesday but is hoping to play in the series opener, as the Heat expect he will.

This is San Antonio's sixth trip to the NBA Finals. The Spurs won it all in 1999, 2003, 2005 and 2007, the last title in that run coming when San Antonio swept a Cleveland team that featured a young LeBron James.

James is no NBA Finals apprentice anymore. He's been to the title round three times since, winning the last two. And James is quick to point out that the Spurs aren't the only team fueled by hunger in this championship round.

"Both teams have motivating factors," James said. "They have a motivating factor. We have our own."

And while there were plenty of teams that looked like contenders this season, neither club was surprised that the end result is the first NBA Finals rematch since 1998.

In other words, maybe Spurs-Heat II was meant to be.

"It was," Miami's Ray Allen said.

Associated Press Writer Raul Dominguez in San Antonio contributed to this story.

Offseason of change may loom for Miami

BY TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

MIAMI — For the Miami Heat, it's all about June.

July can wait.

Four years ago, when LeBron James uttered the now-infamous phrase — "not two, not three, not four, not five ..." — about how many championships he hoped to win with the Heat, it was almost immediately turned into a punch line. It rings prophetic in some ways, with the Heat back in the NBA Finals for a fourth consecutive season.

How the Heat fare in their NBA Finals rematch with the San Antonio Spurs might dictate what happens in July, when James, Chris Bosh and Dwyane Wade can become free agents if they choose. A looming offseason of decisions has been a taboo subject for the Heat "Big 3" this season, and Wade insisted on Monday that Miami's stars have not said a word to each other about what may or may not happen.

"I'm not lying," Wade said.

Still, as long as Miami keeps winning, it seems logical its Big 3 will stay together.

"I want to come back. That's OK to say," Bosh said after the Heat finished their first workout in preparation for the NBA Finals, which begin on Thursday in San Antonio. "I can't speak for anything else and I don't want to take away from the subject at hand, but I like it here. It's Miami. Enough said. People are dying to get here."

Regardless of the outcome of this Heat-Spurs series, there will be changes to the Heat, which is an annual rite for just about every team. James, Wade and Bosh can all opt out of their current deals. Shane Battier is retiring. Ray Allen may think about doing the same, while Mario Chalmers, James Jones and Rashard Lewis are notable free-agents-in-waiting.

Winning a third straight title could make some of those stay-or-go decisions pretty simple. And Wade believes Miami's legacy has been secured.

"Whenever it's all said and done, the legacy of this team, it's going to be a great team," Wade said.

Given that, it's easy to see why so much attention gets paid to how long this team can stay together.

James said he wasn't going to worry about what impact the result of this series will have on the Heat's legacy.

"No, because I live in the moment," James said. "It's almost the same with my individual accomplishments. I never really understand them. The only time I'll be able to appreciate it is when I'm done playing the game."

Finals

(Miami vs. San Antonio if necessary)
Thursday: at San Antonio
Friday: in San Antonio
Tuesday: at Miami
Thursday, June 12: at Miami
Friday, June 13: at San Antonio
Tuesday, June 17: at Miami
Friday, June 20: at San Antonio

By the numbers

103

Number of times the Spurs have won in their past 123 games at home.

25-5

The Spurs' record when they have three or more days between games.

6

Number of times the Spurs have appeared in the title series, including this year.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

SPORTS



Work in progress
Klinsmann still tinkering with US
formation | **World Cup, Page 31**

NBA FINALS

Ready for the rematch



Tim Duncan

SUE OGROCKI/AP

Duncan, James
out to break
their titles tie

By TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

Over the past 10 seasons, only one NBA player has been part of more wins than LeBron James. His name is Tim Duncan. Their numbers over that decade are incredibly similar. Duncan has appeared in 622 regular-season and playoff victories, James has played in 621. Duncan is shooting 50.2 percent from the field, James is shooting 50 percent. Duncan has won two championships with San Antonio during this 10-season stretch, James has two with Miami.



Game 1
Miami
at San Antonio
3 a.m. Friday,
CET; 10 a.m.
Friday, JKT
AFN-Sports

Plus,
when facing
one another
in the NBA
Finals, both
has won one,
lost one.
Here
comes the
tiebreaker
— a Finals
rematch that

will have high expectations.

Miami and San Antonio are the league's last two teams standing for the second consecutive year, their next chapter starting on the Spurs' home floor Thursday night. The Heat won a wild series last season for their second straight championship, needing a frantic rally to avoid elimination in Game 6 and then riding the strength of a 37-point, 12-rebound effort from James to top the Spurs in Game 7.

"I think our guys, they actually grew from the loss last year," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "I call it fortitude. I think they showed an unbelievable amount

SEE REMATCH ON PAGE 37

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- Spurs get much needed rest, Page 39
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LeBron James

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Five things to know about the
Stanley Cup finals **NHL, Page 33**

California Chrome a 3-5 favorite from
No. 2 post at Belmont **Sports Briefs, Page 36**



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